

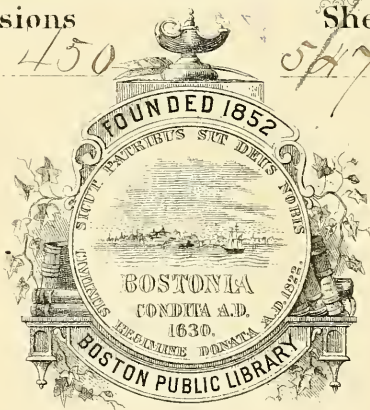


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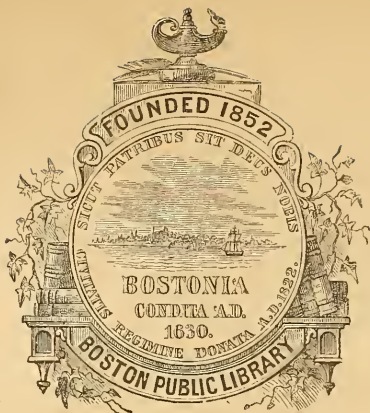
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JESUS IN HIS OFFICES.

FIRST QUARTERLY NUMBER,

CONTAINING

SIX DISCOURSES

ON

JESUS A DELIVERER.
ENSIGN FOR THE NATIONS.
SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

LORD OF ALL.
GREAT PHYSICIAN.
THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

BY A. G. COMINGS.

BOSTON:

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JESUS IN HIS OFFICES.

DISCOURSE I.

JESUS A DELIVERER.

“There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer.” — Rom. 11 : 26.

THE nations walked in their own ways ; and under the tyrant rule of human passion there was universal slavery. Passion’s rule was arbitrary, irrational, and destructive to all the God-given rights of man. Individual men bowed beneath the yoke of a self-created and degrading servitude, while national establishments were great engines of oppression, violence, and wrong. There was no true freedom known among men, because there was no Deliverer for man.

Prophets were heard declaring, thousands of years ago, that a day, then future, was approaching, when “in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem should be deliverance,” and that “out of Zion should go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

A new administration of government was to be opened, under a new lawgiver and King, and freedom should be secured by law. The law of the spirit of life should make men free from the law of sin and death. Those who received the word, or law, of the

great Deliverer, and continued in his word, would be his disciples indeed ; and they should know the truth, and the truth should make them free.

That Christ was a Deliverer in a strictly legal sense, is plain from the fact that Zion was the place from which a new law was to be issued, and out of Zion should come forth a Deliverer. If it had been in a personal power that he was to prove a Deliverer, it might have been said that out of Bethlehem should come forth the Deliverer ; for he was born in Bethlehem. If he had been a Deliverer in a strictly political sense, it would have been said that out of Galilee, or out of Nazareth, came forth the Deliverer. But the authority of Christ's law was declared upon Mount Zion first, after the New Covenant was ratified by his blood, and that on the day of Pentecost. From Zion it went out to the nations, for the liberation of all who would prefer liberty in Christ to the slavery of carnal passions, and liberation from sin to the slavery of eternal condemnation.

The laws of Christ, in their full and universal application, would restore to all men the rights which naturally belong to them. These rights are many, now variously violated and destroyed, in every part of the world.

I. The first right of every man is the *Right of Being*. He to whom God has given life has a natural right to that life, and no other person in the world has any copartnership in, nor power over, the individual's right of being. When God gives life to a man, He gives him a right to live.

Nations claim the ownership of individuals, and .

assume the right to drive them, in hordes of millions, to the great human slaughter-house — the battle-field. Jesus found all men under the slavery of this idea. Nations, by conscription, forced men to leave the peaceful pursuits of life and go out into the storm of battle, to kill or be killed. This was the principle upon which the bloody empires of past ages were built. The state claimed the right to compel a man to kill and be killed for the promotion of its schemes, whatever they might be. The kingdoms and dominions of this world are all founded upon this principle, and therefore God has determined to destroy them. The kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ. When they do, the sword will be changed to a ploughshare, the spear to a pruning-hook, and nation will no longer lift up sword against nation.

Jesus said that, if his kingdom was of this world, his servants would fight, that he should not be delivered to the Jews. He had come into the world to destroy the great principle of war, by asserting the individual's natural right of being. He pronounced blessings on peace-makers, was called the Prince of Peace, and ordered the sword into its scabbard when a zealous disciple was willing to fight for his preservation from Jewish malice. For centuries his disciples maintained this natural right of man, by refusing to serve in the Roman armies. The influence of Christianity is compelling nations to depend upon volunteer enlistments, to make up their slaughtering hosts. The Deliverer has come, and the rights of man must be restored.

II. Next, to every man's right of being, is the right to room in the world to live—*the Right of Place*. God gave the air and the soil as an indispensable necessity, and a common inheritance to the human family. Every man who has being must have some breathing-place in air, and must cover some standing-spot on the soil. His right to breathe the air may as well be denied him as his right to a place whereon to live. God be thanked that he has so made the air that men cannot bottle it up, and compel their fellow-men to buy at their price, or go without breath! If men could monopolize the air, and make it a marketable commodity, they certainly would do it. There is not a single gift, among all the mercies of God, intended by the Creator for the equal benefit of all his creatures, that men have not monopolized whenever they possibly could. Every poor man ought to give sincere thanks to God for air to breathe and sunlight to cheer his way. These he has; he has them without price, because God has made it impossible for man to monopolize them. But the right of place, space on the soil whereon to stand or walk, to rest or work, is equally necessary to his mortal existence. This bulky being must have space. In the combination of the elements of his mortal tabernacle, all is not air, nor air and water. But this bodily man partakes of earth, air, and water. He cannot live a moment without all of these. In the necessities of his being, God has written the natural law of his right to air to breathe, water to drink, and earth to stand on and to cultivate for his subsistence.

God never constituted any man the rightful owner of the soil beyond what he needed for his subsistence,

or could and would cultivate for the common good of the whole great family of man. Men have marked out the earth in every part, and strapped it down in servile subjection to their charters of monopoly. Every monopolist is also an extortioner. They have compelled the soil, which God gave to be productive under cultivation, to lie barren and unproductive under monopoly. They have held it, and now hold it, under the burning curse of barrenness, by an assumed right, in contravention of the benevolent purposes of God.

When Jesus appeared he found the world all worldliness; men holding possessions beyond any power they possessed for improvement. When such men came to him, and proposed to become his disciples, he met them where they were guilty. He commanded such a person, saying, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." And it is written of one that "he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

Jesus never gave an example, nor taught a single precept, nor uttered a single command, which did not involve a positive principle of his great system, introduced for the deliverance of mankind from oppression. It is worthy also of particular notice that, when he had finished his personal ministry, and the chosen disciples took up the work of applying his doctrine and laws, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, rich men "sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all, as every one had need." And again it was said of the disciples of Christ, "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought

the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

Thus did the Great Deliverer begin the work of restoring to men their right to the earth as a place of mortal existence ; and thus did he command and constrain monopolists to give up their grasp on what they could not hold for the good of all.

III. In connection with man's right of mortal being, and his right of room on earth to live, must also be considered his *Right of Person*. Jesus taught, with great force and clearness, that in the man was both a person and a spirit. As the house and an inhabitant within it, so was man. The person was the house ; the spirit was the inhabitant. No such inhabitant could occupy two such houses properly, and by right. Each soul, or spirit, had its proper tabernacle or dwelling. But the house was not of more consequence than its inhabitant. The house — this mortal body — might go to decay and be consumed ; but the soul could live without it. It would live. Each spirit had a right to occupy and control its house — the body.

Jesus told his disciples that those in power among the Gentiles exercised lordship over others, and that those who were great in power were called benefactors ; but, said he, "It shall not be so among you." He then taught them that the one among his disciples who should of his own accord make himself a servant of all, would be the greatest. The custom among the Gentiles which he referred to was neither a religious custom nor any social habit. It was the custom which divided the Gentile world into the classes —

lords and slaves. This custom he condemned as inadmissible among his disciples.

The spirit of George Washington had but one clay tabernacle, or "earthly house," in which it could or would dwell. That house God gave to that spirit. It was a white house. The negro man Jack was also a spirit and an earthly house. God gave the spirit of the man Jack a house. It was a black house. Now, the spirit of George Washington could not become the inhabitant of the black house; nor could the spirit of the negro man Jack become the inhabitant of the white house of George Washington. In the resurrection the spirit of George Washington will not cling to the house of the man Jack, nor will black Jack's spirit claim the house of George Washington.

To establish the right of possession to a man, or to the person of a man, the spirit of that man, under Christ, has the sole right. If we were to suppose that some men had a right of property in the spirits of other men, it would be to suppose that in the world of spirits there might be slave-markets, — spirits making sale of their rights of property in spirits, and the time of heaven's eternal music beat by the tread of slave-coffles.

Christ came to restore to every man his rights, and the direct tendency and the ultimate result of his mission and laws is to be the bursting open of prison-doors to all who are bound and oppressed. His laws are working and will work the deliverance of all who suffer oppression in any and every land.

IV. Two great and important ends to be answered by man in this mortal state give proof to us of a *Right of*

Property. It is a natural right, as based upon a natural necessity. No man can live without food ; no man can be comfortable without clothing. Food and clothing, and that which is necessary to procure these, are property. The mental man has property in his mentality, and the muscular man has property in his muscles. But neither mind nor muscle can be changed into food or clothing, except by exercise. This is labor. Mind is to be cultivated ; and the soil is to be cultivated. God requires both to be done. All labor which is necessary and useful is also honorable. What is of utility must ever be honorable of itself. The ploughman at his plough, the mechanic directing his machine, the physician dealing out his pills, the barrister at the bar, the preacher in the pulpit, all laboring for proper, necessary or useful ends, are alike honorable as laborers. The labor of every one is entitled to a reward. His labor enriches the world, and it should enrich him not less than it does others. There is no difference in the right of claim between him who preaches a sermon and him who pegs a shoe. If he who pegs a shoe goes barefoot because his labor is not rewarded, he may truly plead that he is oppressed. So, also, if he who preaches a sermon is invited to feed his body on faith, because his labor is denied an honorable reward, he may surely declare that such circumstances are not his salvation.

Every industrious and virtuous man or woman, whatever his or her calling, has a right to a comfortable subsistence. This is the narrowest limit to the right of property. Every command of Christ to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked is a recognition of this common and natural right of all. He who, to the ex-

tent of his ability, labors in the world's great workshop, in whatever way, for the common good, has as natural a right to a comfortable subsistence as the richest man that the sun shines on. Were it not so, God would have no right to require of those who are able to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. The laws of God, by Christ, all rest on *existing right*. They invade no right of the rich man to favor the poor.

The right of property is also recognized beyond one's necessities, to the great end of doing good to those who need assistance. This is the broadest bound to which the laws of Christ extend the right of possession or property. Possession, for sake of the possession, is called covetousness. It is condemned of God as an infringement of right, a usurpation and perversion of the gracious gifts of God, and is denounced by the authority of Christ as a hell-deserving crime.

Let the right of *possession for sake of the possession* be admitted, and every species of monopoly finds sanction and security, and the millions of the world may be driven from a right to the comforts or necessities of life, or even a standing spot on the soil. The coinage of the world may be shut up in the coffers of a few; the treasures of food and clothing taken from the last possible power of the poor of the whole earth, and even the soil enslaved to the most unchristian will of monopolists.

God has set bounds to the right of property. Not a particle of all that is called or that may be called property is of any worth to the family of man, EXCEPT WHEN IN USE. God designed it for use, that his creatures might be benefited thereby. The direct use of it for the greatest possible benefit of mankind is

what God requires ; and no man who believes in God dares to question it. He who monopolizes, — who grasps what he does not need, and cannot use for the greatest common good, — in doing so thwarts the purpose and design of God's benevolence to man. His cankered gold will cry to God against him, and the blighted earth will plead against his guilty soul in a day when he will need the pity of a whole universe ; and if he had it from all but God and Christ, he would yet bewail himself as infinitely poor.

Christ has come to deliver the good things of God out of the hands of thieves and robbers. His power must yet undo the slavery of earth and its inhabitants. His laws must yet unlock the great prison-house, and the enslaved earth and its inhabitants hold jubilee.

V. God has given to man a *Power of Thought and a Right of Intellectual Action*. He put him out into the world, where everything is to be learned or remain unknown, without restricting his mental vision, that he might hear and see, and think upon what he heard and saw. The world's imaginary wise men have built a snug box for each man's head in the slavery of their infallible opinions, and require and wish to compel every man to look at all the world's wide wonders through a gimlet-hole. There is no freedom of thought by the world's admission. Every man is required, in religion, in politics, in philosophy, and in everything else, to swallow the creed of some party, and examine no further.

The quivering slaves of sect stand palsied and trembling in the outer court of reason, and dare not, for fear of anathemas and excommunications, to seek

from God or men any measure more of truth than their party leaders have meted out to them. Year after year they boast that they have kept themselves obediently within the pen of party, strict and shameless slaves, and have not questioned nor denied the party right to make opinions for them.

Truth, in all her excellency and beauty, offers herself to the open, unfettered mind. Infidelity offered to liberate the thinking world, but she sadly failed. She was an enemy to the light of God. She believed nothing which rested its plea upon positive proof, and she embraced what was sustained by no positive evidence.

God requires every man to use all his intellectual powers as directly accountable to Him; not as directly accountable to assuming and presumptuous men, and only remotely accountable to God. Creed manufacturers, party-platform builders, denominational standard-makers, and self-constituted Solomons, have, as it were, taken truth out of the lips of Christ, and turned it into falsehood. They have thrown out their theories, and offered to save the world from thinking, or the labor of studying the word of God. We will seek truth at the fountain-head. Christ is the Rock in which we trust. He bids us to continue in his word, and assures us that by so doing we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. We will trust in him, and he will deliver us. The right to seek truth for ourselves is a divinely-consecrated right, and no one should ever surrender it.

VI. Every person has a *Right of Moral Conscientiousness*. No man who follows Christ will approbate or

defend all actions or principles because they are old, or because they are fashionable. Falsehood may wear a wig, and error may boast of its gray hairs. As to fashion, sin has been more fashionable than righteousness in all ages of time. To bow before the idol fashion, in dress and equipage, and pay the bills, will press a poor man's honesty into a tight place. A man has a right to use his money for more useful and beneficial ends than to trim his family to all new notions of dress, and furnish his house with costly furniture to please other people's eyes. He has the right, in defiance of the despotism of fashion, because God requires him to do good to others, to help the needy, to contribute largely to the promotion of every plan for the improvement of the human family. God never made men and women to spend their lives in a race of competition with bugs and butterflies in outward show. It is immoral and wicked. The apostles of Christ have spoken with great plainness upon this point. Their commands to the churches were by the authority of Christ. The man or woman who repudiates all the laws of the fashionable world, and who practises Christ's laws of benevolence, does no more than to maintain a distinct right.

The laws of Christ will deliver us from this oppression. They must be made the rule of action for mankind.

VII. We all have a *Right to adopt that system of religion which is commended to our judgment*. The governments of old Rome and Greece made religions for the people, and compelled the people to be religious in the way they prescribed. Modern nations have

done very nearly the same. But every man in the wide world has a perfect right, because it is his highest duty, to be religious in the way his honest judgment shall dictate. Papist has no right to proscribe Protestant, nor Protestant to proscribe Papist, nor Mahometan to proscribe Jew, nor Jew to proscribe Mahometan. Every man must give an account for himself to God. To his own Master he stands or falls. All the religious systems of the world are not true — they cannot all be true. But who shall claim the privilege of deciding for his neighbor, where that man is under a direct and positive accountability to the Most High? Every man's own account will be large enough for the final settlement, without his taking stock in his neighbor's accountability. Christ will deliver the world from bigotry and intolerance. His word must have a higher influence. All who belong to Christ must recognize the rights of others, and carefully preserve them.

VIII. Men are formed for society; that is, for intercourse with each other. We are social beings. We have social rights. Christ commands every man to love his neighbor as he loves himself. Thus he places all men on a social equality. By this precept and law he would make all men fellow-helpers. Every man would be the friend of his fellow-man. Every man has a right to mingle in society while he invades no just right of others, and may claim to be treated with respect and kindness, whatever may be the color of his hair or face, whoever may have been his father, wherever he may have been born, whether he be rich or poor, dressed in fine or in coarse clothing. Christ,

through an apostle, teaches this right, and says, "If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin."

Difference of condition, as ordained by Divine Providence, does not destroy a natural and divine right. What means this elbowing, pushing, crowding, and bullying, so common among men? Why so many censures, anathemas, and slanderous expressions, one against another? Christ forbids it. He requires of his disciples so to live that others shall be constrained to say, "See how these Christians love one another." His laws must be obeyed, and all men will then know that he is a Deliverer.

IX. Jesus gave to men the information which they needed to form a perfect character. His gospel is sufficient to deliver the world from its destructive darkness. He measured the true character. He gave full proof of the power of God to save, and of the willingness of God to save.

In teaching, no one ever surpassed the simplicity and force of his illustrations. He drew from the most common and well-known scenery of this world a perfect imagery to explain the most mysterious and difficult parts of his doctrine. He used but few words, and his words were adapted to the capacity of every one who would be a disciple.

The old philosophers had talked long and written much, and still had communicated but few well-defined and distinct ideas. Their disciples learned nothing positive, and but little which served to improve even their morals. In their schools, when morality ad-

vanced religion declined. The religious faculties and feelings of men needed something definite, positive, and in some way addressed to the eye, either in a work of divine power or in a symbol which should represent it. So it has always been from the creation of the world, and so, undoubtedly, it always will be. Morals may be taught by philosophy, but religion will be inspired by the facts through which men see, as it were, the power and character of God. *Reason* has given great moral precepts to the world ; but displays of divine power and goodness, and *rites* which commemorate such displays, have been an appointed means of inspiring in man and perpetuating a religious feeling.

On this account, undoubtedly, the nations of the earth set up idols ; and it is beyond question that the idolatrous nations became more excessively religious than even the worshippers of the one living and true God. If the measure of religious devotion were to be the criterion of judgment, heathens would be found in advance of Jews or Christians ; and among professed Christians the most idolatrous, licentious, and murderous Papists would be found higher on the scale than a far more really Christian member of the Protestant community.

The teaching of Jesus, and the religious rites which he instituted, were adapted to the great end and object for which he came, namely, to lead men to a pure religious, moral and social character ; that is, to a holy life.

The moral precepts of Jesus invited the closest scrutiny of the truly philosophical mind in all the world. His religious rites were simple, but full of

significance, and exceedingly impressive. The social laws which he gave were suited to the idea of a holy brotherhood.

To form a perfect character, the religious, the moral, and the social, must be combined in their just and proper proportions.

With the labor of a few short years, he furnished an amount of instruction fully sufficient to deliver the whole world from the darkness which had bound it for thousands of years before.

X. The world was oppressed by its guilt and the consequent condemnation. There was no peace nor happiness on earth. Passion prevailed, and sin was not forgiven.

What situation can be worse or more dreadful than to be condemned to die, and know no provision for the pardon of sin?

The history of the world, as it was before Jesus appeared, presents a dreadful scene to view. The hearts of men were hardened by sin, and their hands polluted as with the blood of innocence. Every species of passionate indulgence was allowed. The world was deeply, astonishingly religious; but religion's altars were everywhere polluted. The blood of innocent and holy men was mingled with the blood of slaughtered animals, by the action of murderers, beside the altars of religion.

There was no offer of forgiveness in the religions of the world, except in the system professed by the Hebrews. Their hope looked through a mysterious rite, which, in itself, gave no promise of the reality. Few could see beyond the bleeding victim offered as

an atoning sacrifice. How the forgiveness of sin was facilitated by the bleeding of a lamb must have been as difficult a question to settle in their understandings as it is to many now.

Sin was sin because of the law of God. Had there been no authority, there could have been no law. Without a law there could have been no transgression. Sin was the transgression of law. The authority of God was the foundation of his laws. When those laws were broken there could be no forgiveness, except the same divine authority offered it. An inferior authority could never annul the act or law of a superior.

When Jesus appeared as Mediator of a New Covenant, he delivered the whole world from the slavery of condemnation, in giving a law, by the authority of God, for the remission of sins. It is as much a fixed law of God, under Christ, that the sinner shall receive pardon for his past sins when he obeys the call of the Gospel readily and fully, as it is a law that neglecting and disobeying the Gospel shall be followed with condemnation. The law of promise is a part of the New Covenant, which Jesus sealed with his blood.

He sent heralds into all the earth to make proclamation to all men of the law of pardon. "Thus it is written," said he, "and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Christ has delivered the world from its hopeless condemnation, by providing and introducing a law of pardon. The authority of God is at the foundation of all this. He now offers, through the Gospel, to deliver

men from the criminality, or legal guilt, of their past sins, by pardon. This is the utmost that can be done. The moral turpitude of the sinner's acts cannot be changed, any more than the holiness of God can undergo a change. What *in fact* has been done cannot be undone, by any possibility. As sin is consequent upon law, we say that sin is simply a legal matter. As forgiveness relates only to sin, we must call it a legal matter. As the offering of propitiatory offerings has a relation to forgiveness, we must say of atonements that they are for legal ends.

The repentance of the sinner cannot forgive his past sins. His repentance can affect him only in respect to his future conduct. Past sins it cannot change nor modify. They are of full growth, and cannot annihilate themselves, nor in any way lessen their awful character, by the help of any strong desire or mournful wish which the transgressor may feel. They are beyond his reach entirely. They are past, and past forever. But a broken and violated law is not annihilated nor repealed. It condemns the sinner still; for it cannot possibly justify him. But He who gave the law which has been violated is greater than the law He gave. He has amended that broken law by adding a law of forgiveness. Therefore He can now be just; that is, He can guide his own decisions by law, and yet justify the sinner through a law of forgiveness.

The Gospel now proclaims that, notwithstanding a violated and broken law condemns the sinner for his past sins, yet, by the introduction of a law of forgiveness, God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Jesus has delivered the world from its most dreadful

necessity, by opening a way of pardon and peace for all who will come to him when he calls.

If, by some provision of national law, men should be condemned to suffer death, and there was no law of pardon, the criminal, once guilty, could have no ground of hope. Thousands, guilty under the law, could only expect death. But let that law be amended by a law of pardon, and hope would revive. Yet, again, that law of pardon might be amended by making the conditions to be complied with on the part of the condemned less difficult for them.

The law of pardon, under Christ, requires only a full belief in him, and submission to him. Every candid inquirer, possessed of a humble mind, who opens his eyes to the consideration of the truth, must believe. Men do not believe, because they do not candidly examine.

XI. Christ will deliver those that trust in him from the fear of death. Not only has he given proof of immortality by his resurrection, but he gives innumerable proofs of his power to those who are tried in his service when they pray in distress. He to whom angels are obedient will deliver his saints, in the time of their trouble, if they call upon him.

XII. The Deliverer has come out of Zion, and the prophetic declaration is, "He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." He is to stand up for the deliverance of the fallen Israel from their national distresses, that they may believe in him. The apostle, in the context, says, "And so all Israel shall be saved as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer,

and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob : for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” — “ For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these also now not believed, that, through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy.”

“ Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” — “ The times of the Gentiles,” or the period indicated by “ the fulness of the Gentiles,” it appears evident, is near its close. For eighteen hundred years has the light of the Gospel been given to Gentile lands, and the wild olive-tree has grown upon the stock of Israel. The holy city of the Jews has been trodden down of the Gentiles, and overspread with the abominations of a false religion, for a period of twelve hundred and twenty years ; and the long period of Daniel’s prophecy, in which the city of the Jews and their sanctuary, or holy place, was to be cast down and overspread with abominations, has come within forty years of its end. The same limited period will finish the twelve hundred and sixty years in which the holy city was to be trodden under foot.

The Gentiles must answer for the use and improvement they have made of the divine mercies. And what has been the course of the Gentile world, and even the professed church of Christ in Gentile lands ? Behold the dark ages of apostasy, as dark almost as the deepest heathenism ! Men lived or died, as might be the indication of a nod from the Pope of Rome. Bishops and pastors over the flock of Christ, instead of being examples of purity, stood before men as the most dreadful examples of licentiousness, bestiality,

and murder. The Greek Church, how it appears, with its political head a despot, crushing out the nobler sentiments and aspirations of the human soul! Then behold the Protestant world! How often have Protestants driven humanity to perfect madness, by persecutions too terrible to be borne! Even now, what claim has the Protestant world to the continued favor of God above the Jews? What oppressions, what corruptions, what wrongs, are now writing a bloody sentence against the Protestant professors of Christianity! The heart sickens at the dreadful thought! But God may be soon to open a new scene to the eyes of the world. John saw, in his Apocalyptic visions, the final reception of the Gospel of Christ by the Jews. He saw a wonderful city, in riches and splendor exceeding all that had ever been seen; and it had twelve foundations, the number answering to the number of Israel's tribes. In its foundations were the names of twelve apostles of Christ, and there were twelve in the apostleship of the circumcision. It had twelve pearly gates, and these were for the twelve tribes of Israel.

God has enabled the Jews, scattered and proscribed as they have been to this time, to become possessed of almost the wealth of the world. The great bankers of London, Paris, and Vienna, men who count their money by hundreds of millions, are of the stock of Abraham. They can control the exchequers of all empires and kingdoms.

Christ can dash the nations as a piece of pottery is broken to pieces. His hand unseen is guiding them, to dash each other to pieces, now. The Koran has had the time of sway that God declared it should have, or it is nearly at an end. The worshippers of

the Arabian prophet must retire from Jerusalem. The crescent will cease to be uplifted from her holy hills. The crown of David and the cross of Christ will meet and triumph there ; for the decree of God upon Jerusalem is, that “ IT IS THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.”

XIII. The final deliverance, which will be effected, must be in that great day when the last enemy of the saints, Death, shall be destroyed. The grave shall give up its captives. The sea shall give up its dead. The last sigh of the saint shall end in eternal silence ; the last groan of the oppressed prisoner shall be broken off ; tears shall be wiped away ; the wicked disturb no more ; death destroy no more ; and when the pen of history shall be balanced in an angel’s hand, a great voice shall be heard from the midst of the throne, saying, “ Write ; for, behold, I make all things new.”

DISCOURSE II.

ENSIGN FOR THE NATIONS.

“And he shall set up an ENSIGN FOR THE NATIONS, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”—Isaiah 11 : 12.

THE Polytheists of ancient times traced no religious system to divine authority. With the idea of multiplied and diversified deities they connected services, ceremonies, and festivals; but these were without fixed form, regular observance, or rational significance.

Men created religions according to their imagination of what would please the gods. Then, whatever propitious omen or circumstance followed, it was ascribed to the favor of the gods, and the devotees quickened their zeal in the service of religion.

Diversity of religions was urged as a necessity by the more intelligent of polytheists. Among the early opponents of Christianity, of the polytheistic school, Jesus was assailed with bitter and merciless severity on account of the unity which was required among all who should believe in him. One of the most vigorous writers declared that a man must be a fool who would think to unite those of various nations and tribes under one religious system.

They believed that *religion* was the principal virtue,

and the whole virtue, of any religious system ; and that diversity in the forms, services, and character, of the religions of men, would serve to benefit the world rather than injure it. This view, original with ancient polytheists, and always false, has been taken, and to some degree maintained, by the advocates of sectarian divisions in the church of Christ.

The nations and peoples of ancient times knew no central standard, around which the truly devout of all countries should, or even could, rally in union. They did not believe there was any. They denied that there could be any. They therefore looked for no "Ensign for the nations."

With religious ideas and devotional exercises or services, men are everywhere capable of religious emotions. These emotions are common to all people, under whatever variety of religious system, when embraced as true. The Mahometan at his prayers, the sincere Papist retiring from before his confessor, the Shaker in his dance, and the Pagan as he bows before his idol, all experience religious emotions, and thus know the power of their religion to excite ecstasies ; and they take their raptures to be the voice of their God within them.

Religious excitement has always been a producing cause of pleasurable emotions. Those who know nothing higher in religion than such pleasurable emotions know nothing of the characteristics of a true religion in contrast with a false one. They know what they have experienced, and that is everything with them. So they cling to that system with which they have experienced such emotions as have had no counterpart in all the other experiences of life.

The capability of the human soul for ecstatic experiences, under the excitement of religious ideas, which we see to exist in a similar degree among Hindoo Pagans, Mahometans, Mormons, Shakers, and Christians, cannot be supposed to be any *new power*, which did not exist among men of ancient times ; but is a faculty of the human soul, implanted by the Creator, and which must have had its action among ancient polytheists, as it had among simple theists. The excessive gratification of this faculty, both in ancient and modern times, which may be justly called *a lust of religious pleasures*, has been as real a perversion of the gracious designs of God as is an excessive indulgence of the appetites and passions of the flesh.

The Creator has graciously endowed his rational creatures with various capabilities for pleasure. All the senses of man are capable of finding pleasure from without. The eye beholds, the ear hears, the nose smells, the mouth tastes, and the skin feels. But all this must not be allowed to persuade us that the mere pleasures of sense are the high ends of human life, and the ordained purposes of God concerning man. We should acknowledge the goodness and love of God in granting such capacities for pleasure ; but, at the same time, remember that he has withheld from us the privilege of excessive indulgence, ordaining that what was designed for life and joy in the excessive indulgence shall become a cause of death.

So it is also with the faculty for religious pleasure. The human soul is capable of being carried to such a pitch of excitement upon religious ecstasies that the physiological structure of the whole body shall be irrep-

arably affected by it, all its functions deranged, and a condition of extreme impressibility produced, which shall unfit the subject of it for both the duties of religion and of nature, and, in a word, unfit him to serve God, or himself, or his neighbor.

It is not true devotion, however deep, which ever produces such consequences ; because with a true and intelligent devotion, the strictness of the law of Christ, and a constant watchfulness against saying or doing evil, so moderates one's feelings and hopes as to secure safety.

The ancient religionists were doubtless satisfied with themselves, divided into numerous classes, and each class subdivided by sects, as the various religionists of the world now are. But God gave an "Ensign for the nations." It was necessary for ancient religionists, and equally is it necessary for those of our times. A standard has been set for all nations and times.

The standard which Christ has set for the nations is definite and positive. Nothing belongs to Christianity which is not *of Christ*. No man is a sinner for disobeying what Christ has not required. No man is sinless who disobeys the least command of Christ.

This "Ensign for the nations" is not a mere name. Yet it is a name, — a name having authority, a name at the naming of which every knee should bow. But that which should be a standard for all nations and peoples should be distinctly marked by peculiar characteristics. A standard religion, a standard moral code, a standard social law, a standard organic law, all in one, a new system held up as an ensign for all, could not at any point be left undefined.

It was not the design of God to give the world a

religion, as though the world had been without a religion before ; but to give a religious system, a moral system, a social system, and to organize that system of systems and designs into one perfectly-defined whole, as an instrument of God's creation and man's adoption, perfect in itself, and a perfect law of liberty to man.

Nothing is Christianity but Christianity itself, as it came from Christ. It must be marked by its original features or peculiarities, all distinct, clear in its outlines, and perfect in its combinations, and then it will be Christianity.

Under the name of Christianity men see sects almost innumerable, widening their differences, departing from distinctive peculiarities to the most extreme latitudes, and blending with the peculiarities of Christianity the creations of their own fancies. Thus the Ensign which God has set up is hidden from the sight of men, and Christianity itself is not seen by the world.

Christianity was not introduced into the world as a foundation of many sects, a "bone of contention" for contending parties to quarrel over, and become more wicked by reason of more strife and hatred. It was introduced to unite all in one. The lion and the lamb were to lie down together in peace and love under its influence.

Everything good is centralized under Christ. The centre is a grand point of attraction and combination. It is a unit. It ever must be a unit. As God is one, so in the spiritual world there is a common centre. It is God.

He who is the centre of the spiritual world is a

Creator. He has created material systems, each a sphere, and a moral system also. God's moral system is a sphere, and has its central axis, which is Christ. Independent of this, there is nothing which holds a relation to God. In the presence of Christ, relating to the systematic direction of the affairs of his church or kingdom, men are without authority or power. Christ is all. His word alone is authority. His spirit only is power. He says, "Vainly do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The Messiah was to gather together the outcasts of Israel, the dispersed among the Gentiles, and all the children of God which were scattered abroad. He told his Jewish disciples that he had other sheep which were not of that fold; that he must call them, that there might be one fold and one shepherd.

It was not enough that they were his sheep. He had a design upon them beyond that. They were to be folded together in one fold.

It does not change the nature of a sheep to bring it into the fold; but it changes its condition. Without are dogs, dangers, and destruction. Within was to be safety, under the shepherd's care.

His sheep would consent to be folded together. He said, "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me." And again, "He that entereth by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice."

The sheep of Christ are entirely governed by the voice of the shepherd. They do not choose leaders

nor manufacture folds for themselves. It is not left to their choice whether they will belong to the fold — the church — or not. The flock of Christ must be a unit, whether its members are from the stock of Abraham or of Gentile extraction.

How beautifully did Israel's poet-prophet describe the lifting up of the Ensign for the nations! "Behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forests with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which

shall stand for an Ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.”

Out of chaos God brings order ; out of discord, harmony ; out of variety, perfection ; and out of diversities, union. The world first existed in a chaotic state ; but order followed. The innumerable voices of the living creation must first have been discordant, but those differences of tone led to musical harmony. The varied colors of the rainbow, blended together, produce the pure and colorless ray ; and the mingling together of all the varieties of human dispositions and divine attributes produces the perfection of Christian refinement. The race of man presents no two specimens which are alike. The diversity is as nearly endless as the number of the specimens ; but not one of the host can *alone* form a union.

It was never the design of God to unite men of all nations in one church, by abolishing all differences either of physical condition, natural disposition, intensity or diversity of thought, mental capabilities, or religious ideas ; for then must Christianity have stultified and nullified everything which is natural in man. It was his design to unite the unlike, to harmonize the discordant, to make a solid union out of the most incoherent materials.

The simplicity of the Christian laws of union, the organic bodily bond of the church, has long been a stumbling-block to the worldly wise in the church. They cannot, by any means, imagine why God should have given so few rules for the organic regulation of the church, unless he designed to have them supply the deficiency. That imaginary deficiency they have attempted to supply ; but, unfortunately, the rules which

men have added to the divine laws, to secure a more perfect organic union of the church, have only made disunion permanent and perpetual.

The government of God over man was designed to be most perfect. At the same time, that strict and perfect law was to secure to man the most full and perfect *liberty* which it was possible for him to enjoy.

Christ, in leaving but few rules for the union and organization of his church, did not leave its future prosperity to depend upon the *inventive powers* of its members, but upon their *characters*. If in their characters men seek truly to honor Christ in his church, they will find that "the law of the Lord is perfect." But, if nothing is made to depend upon their characters, true liberty must be exchanged for multitudinous and intricate municipal regulations.

With the church or the world, it must be regarded as a true principle, that the more is made to depend upon the existence of a true and noble character, and the less upon specific laws for the union and regulation of a community, the greater the allowance of true freedom. We may resolve it into a maxim, that *The more law is necessary for the government of a community, the less freedom can be enjoyed in such community.*

The rules which Jesus gave for his church were few, simple, and mostly of a general character. Thanks be given to God for this display of wisdom! With these simple rules, no church can long endure, unless its members have the spirit and character of Christ in a good measure. It would be well for the world of mankind if no church which is unworthy of Christ could preserve its visibility as an organized body. But the various rules and regulations which men have

added to the simple rules of Jesus serve to perpetuate the visible existence of churches, which in their characters grossly misrepresent his character and spirit.

THE CHURCH was not the grand end and object of his mission to the world ; but the reconciliation of man to God, and the consequent establishment of man thus reconciled in a godlike character. The church was a designed and appointed instrument, as the "pillar and ground of the truth," to that end, after he went away.

Jesus destroyed the enmity between Jews and Gentiles by his own death, to form out of the two "one new man, so making peace." Here, again, we behold the Ensign exalted to unite the nations in one church.

Unity represents God. In his existence he is one. "The Lord our God is one Lord." In his attributes, with all the diversity, there is still unity. If I may so speak, I will say that the diversified attributes of God keep perpetual unity by condescension. They differ in their natures, but in obedience to the divine wisdom they act in unity.

In the only sense in which the pure-hearted of all opposing sects in Christendom are one now, the sincere-hearted among Jews and Gentiles, who worshipped one living and true God, were one when Christ came. But God did not recognize this oneness of similarity as *unity*. They were not of "one fold." The wisdom of God required among men a positive unity in one body or church. This being the positive requirement, the negative in action is certainly sinful.

There cannot be unity without diversity. Where there is no diversity it is sameness. As the attributes

of God all differ, and yet while differing form the more perfect unity, by condescension, so must it be in the church of Christ,—the unity of diversity in obedience to the word of God.

Some men, of peculiar natural characteristics, make better Methodists ; some, of other natural characteristics, better Quakers ; others, better Presbyterians ; others, better Episcopalians ; and so with other classes. For this reason, some men are better suited with Methodism than with Christianity as it came from Christ ; some, with Quakerism ; some, with Presbyterianism ; some, with Episcopalianism ; and so with others, and other denominational systems. But how much this looks like ancient Paganism, when every man could have a religion to suit him ! And how little it looks like that unity of diversity which was to be seen under the “ Ensign for the nations ” !

Were all the creeds in Christendom to be repudiated, all the denominational standards to be cast aside, and all denominational names to be forgotten, and were love to God, love to man, and love of truth, to take their place as controlling influences, what floods of light, what oceans of love, would flow out to the now benighted millions in all lands, and well up in the enraptured souls of all true believers ! What strifes, what enmities, what accusing jealousies, what intolerant persecutions, would then cease to scandalize the professed people of God !

In studying Christianity itself, as a standard of truth and duty, the most penetrating mind, acting with sincere earnestness, is in danger of misapprehending important truths. But how much more is he in danger of error who takes other men's views of Christianity for

his standard of truth, instead of studying the Gospel itself!

Calvin and Wesley each had their views of Christianity. If Calvin or Wesley erred at any point, in their views, those who studied their writings as standards would be likely to err where they erred, and not always to understand them as they understood themselves at other points; and, therefore, whatever credit may be due to them as lovers of truth, or as servants of Christ, they should never be regarded as standards to Christians. There is one only "Ensign for the nations."

The chemist takes in his hand a piece of rock, so firm, so solid, so strong, that it could resist the forces of heat and cold for a thousand generations without any perceptible change, and he asks, "Of what is this composed?" He enters upon the investigation of its constituent elements, and finds that a dozen different substances, each in its nature unlike all the others, together make up the whole. Thus unity, formed by diversity, is the order of God. It is strong by his power.

But let him take a piece of solid marble, composed mostly as it is of one substance, and exclude from it all which makes diversity, and its unity and solidity ceases at once.

Christ, in his precepts and his example, was the only Ensign for the gathering together of the nations. His precepts and his example were harmonious. Yet both were necessary. His example interpreted his precepts, and his precepts explained his example.

The great end, or object, to be accomplished in man, was godliness, or "love, out of a pure heart, and faith

unfeigned." Therefore it was said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." And again, "The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned."

The LOVE which was to distinguish the disciples of Christ was to be known from all other manifestations of love. It was to be so unlike all other manifestations of affection that all men were to know his disciples by their love to each other. Said Jesus, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, because you have love one to another."

True Christians cannot be known by their creed. They are known only by the purity, depth, and sincerity, of their love. A man may be sound in his creed, correct in all his theory of Christianity ; but his knowledge and understanding of the theory of the Gospel may be only intellectual, and he be proud of his orthodoxy, while yet in heart an enemy to God. It is not only necessary that a man should understand the theory of God, and his manifestations, but that he should also understand and know himself, as a sinner, a creature of carnal corruptions, a being disposed to excessive self-love, and consequently disposed to disobey God and disregard his neighbor—a creature of carnal affinities, and of spiritual emptiness, infinitely indebted to God, and immeasurably indebted to his fellow-men.

He who prides himself upon his theoretic soundness, and despises him he deems in error, realizes not that he is immeasurably indebted to the erring world. Every one who lives in this world contributes a part towards the universal condition. All things are blessings to the children of God. Every one we see, and every one we hear of, in some way admonishes us.

The good encourage us, and the wicked warn us. Our friends teach us goodness ; our enemies, watchfulness.

Filled with Christ-like love, differences of opinion will not forbid men from united action for the honor of Christ and the salvation of men. The great obstacle to the union of those who believe in Christ is in the lack of Christ's spirit of love. It is truly, also, the lack of Christian character. Without love, deep Christian love, there can be no union. Without mutual love among Christians, there can be no vital piety. He that loveth not his brother is a murderer ; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. He that loveth not his brother abideth in darkness.

It is the greatest of all undertakings to properly serve Christ, and honor him as the sole reliance, or Ensign, of our faith.

The lifting up of an ensign, or banner, in ancient times, was to concentrate all forces for battle. From the most distant times this has been a custom. He who held up the standard had command. While he stood up, bearing his banner, the host closed upon him on every side, and shouted for victory. When the ensign fell it was a sign of defeat.

Christianity suffers defeat in the loss of that spirit of Christian love which is necessary to produce a harmonious practical union, in one body, of those whose religious or theological views are diversified. It suffers defeat in the sacrifice of Christian character for the multiplication of proselytes to sect.

The founders and lawgivers of denominational systems, which systems divide the church and defeat the true designs of Christ, are mere men. They have acted without inspiration, and without divine authority. All

their works reproach the Ensign which has been set for all nations. To honor their schemes and laws is to dishonor Christ. If there is virtue, power, or authority, in Christ's plan of union, love, and holiness, there is sin in giving countenance to any mere denominational system.

In the first or primitive age of the Christian church, those who offered themselves as candidates for membership were allowed to be their own judges of their faith in Christ, and were received upon their simple confession of Christ before men. No theological screws nor press-boards were applied to their heads. From the time of their confessing Christ, the church judged of their faith by their submission to Christ and love to Christians. This is the course which received the sanction and blessing of God in the beginning ; and I confidently believe that it is the only course which can ever secure the unity of the church in the future.

As early as other tests were applied to new converts, so early was division, disunion, and sectarian hatred, consequent upon it. It has continued so ever since.

In the primitive church, no one was allowed to strangle the young faith of the convert with any dose of abstruse or metaphysical theology. He simply believed in Christ as the Son and the sent of God. He embraced him as his leader, by submitting in obedience to the Gospel. In this simple manner Jews, Greeks, Scythians, Romans, and barbarians of countless tribes, became one in Christ, and sat together in heavenly places. The great objects before them all then were, to walk worthy of Christ, and to make known the savor of his name.

Christ has undergone no change. He requires now

just what he required then. The church now, to be the church of Christ, needs just what the church needed eighteen hundred years ago—the same deep love, the same holy harmony. The least loss of love in the church is loss of character. Loss of character is loss of power. Without deep and fervent love, it cannot prevail with God in its prayers, nor over men in its exhortations. It cannot even preserve itself in peace.

The world is not to be Christianized by mere truth. An exhibition of Christian love is necessary for the world's conversion. A divided church is powerless, in its example, to exert any Christian influence. It may cause the truth to be preached, but its example will only retard the operations of Gospel truth. Jesus, on the very evening of his betrayal, prayed earnestly for the union of his disciples, as though the conversion of the world depended upon their example of union and love. He “lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which

thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition ; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word ; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect

in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee ; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou didst send me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it ; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Such was the great desire of Jesus, as he drew near to the crucifixion. His prayer was for the unity of all his disciples. It was a prayer which came forth from an anguished soul. He was laying the foundation of his church, in the single fact of his messiahship. He had announced the great, distinguishing peculiarity of his system, that all men should know his disciples by the love which they had one to another.

Christians, do you rally in love and fidelity around the Ensign which has been lifted up for you ? What a noble cause you have engaged in ! What a glorious work is assigned you ! What a blessed name you bear ! What a heavenly spirit is to animate and distinguish you ! Well may you rally around your great Ensign.

What a character a true Christian sustains ! He devotes his life to the good of his brethren, and thus lays down his life for their sakes ; in lowliness of mind esteeming others better than himself ; carrying food to relieve the famishing, and water for the thirsty ; wiping away the tear of sorrow, and shedding tears of sympathy ; enduring the world's hatred, and cherishing love to all mankind ; returning blessings for cursings,

good for evil ; waiting by the wayside for the weary, to bear for them their heavy burden ; bending over the bed of the sufferer, to take away the sharpness of the sting of death ; waiting himself, as a steward in this outer court of God's temple, to be called up higher ; and yet he knows not the extent of his stewardship, the importance of his feeble efforts, the power of his prayers, nor how many angels have charge to guard his footsteps day by day. Frail being ! His life is a shadow ; and yet the feeble efforts, which are the small fruits of his faithfulness, could not one of them be lost in the moral universe without producing a shock.

Those who fully recognize the “ Ensign for the nations ” must ever strive for the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace ; they must seek for the things that make for peace, and whereby one may edify another. Such must be their life. Separated from the world, and yet living in the world ; not *of* the world, yet the *light* of the world ; every one of them all has a life-insurance for eternity, with no other open condition than that of a few days more of faithfulness in the purest, holiest, and most important cause which ever engaged the interest of men or angels.

DISCOURSE III.

SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“Unto you that fear my name shall the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arise with healing in his wings.”—Malachi 4 : 2.

A WORLD without a Sun ! What a thought ! Planets that roll or fly without a central sun are out of the way of God’s appointed order. Their course is erratic and wild.

Righteousness without a source is like a world in light without a sun. A ray of light is not born of nothing, and without power. It has a source of existence, or comes from creating power.

Every sun in the extended universe is the centre of a system. It has its sphere of action and influence. It enlightens every planet which belongs to its system. It holds all in obedience to its central power. Each planet has power to revolve on its own axis, but no power to depart from its circuit.

Thus the heavens are established in order, and obedient to the power which reigns over all material things. Suns shine to give light to worlds around them. God, in the material universe, reigning over all, is superior to all.

The sun becomes a symbol for the moral world. There is a central power in the moral government of

the world. Around that central axis every living and intelligent being has a measured and designed circuit. He cannot fly away beyond the bounds of its authority with consent. He can come no nearer to the centre of moral power or authority than his lawful circuit. He has his life with motion. He lives. To live is to act, to be accountable. To remain idle is to act, in the moral world. To refrain from doing is to do, in moral life. Idleness and ignorance are crimes, where God has provided opportunities for service and for study.

All men have a measured and relative nearness to Christ, who is the central power or authority of the moral world. They cannot depart from that measure of distance. They are within seeing distance, comprehending distance, to his moral precepts, and cannot go out of that seeing distance to rid them of responsibility. If they could rush into that central power, and, taking authority away from Christ, embody it into themselves, it would destroy his power as a Sun of Righteousness. But that is impossible.

A sun is to be considered as a light-bearer. Christ is to men the great light-bearer of righteousness.

In the creation of the world, God said "Let there be light," long before he made the sun to rule by day. The sun, however, became the official light-bearer to the world. After it became such, light was not to be expected, to constitute day, not drawn from the official king of day.

There was light long before Christ came into the world. But when he came it was as the "Sun of Righteousness." All light centred in him. He is the official light-bearer to the moral world. His precepts

are authority transcending that of philosophers and the world's wise men.

Without the recognition of some central authority, there can never, by any possibility, be moral harmony and equality among men.

If each one has a different measuring-rule, justice can never be measured, equality can never be found. If one man's measure, which he called a yard, were longer than another man's yard, and there was no authority by which to regulate all measures, how could any right of measure ever be positively settled? So I ask, if, in the moral world, there were no central standard, how would it ever be possible to arrive at a moral conclusion? If there shall be acknowledged no standard authority of moral right and truth, I must deny all ideas of moral right, and, of course, all ideas of right as existing in the world of mortals.

The existence of a Sun of Righteousness, or a positive authority of moral right, in the world, is one of the first and greatest necessities of an intelligent race. Christ is that Sun, and the teachings of the New Testament are the only rules of authority which he gives. By the universal observance of these rules, exact justice would be secured between all men, and an equality of privilege be seen. The maddening inequalities which disturb human society would be obliterated almost in a moment, were the *authority* of the great central standard of right to be universally and practically admitted.

No scheme to ameliorate the condition of human society, but that which is based upon the right of divine authority and wisdom in Christ, can accomplish any real and lasting good. It will be like a globe

without a system or an orbit, a world without a sun. Human reason of itself can never settle a single moral axiom. One man's reason may suggest, but another man's reason will condemn. What one man may claim to be self-evident truth, another will declare to be self-evident falsehood. What one may pronounce wisdom, another will call nonsense.

I have seen human society as affected by almost every variety of moral and religious ideas which exist in what is popularly styled a Christian country; and much observation assures me that in those communities where, from generation to generation, the Scriptures have been studied and honored as *of authority*, there is vastly more equality, unity, peace, and every moral blessing, than in those, however religious or philosophical, where the Scriptures have not been so honored and regarded. I have observed and critically considered the fact, that the presentation of moral and religious ideas upon the ground of philosophy, or their reasonableness, takes little hold upon the conscience or reverence of the mass, especially the young; and under the most learned, able, and eloquent preaching, of such a kind, few enter into the subject; and a loose scepticism, with reckless immorality, comes as an after-crop.

I have come to the full and firm decision that the standard of moral truth is one of *positive authority*; and that whatever lessens the idea of positive authority in Jesus Christ, and in the Scriptures, strikes at the only power for the moral government of man or society.

I have observed communities in which religion is maintained with excessive zeal, and where supposed spiritual leadings are allowed to displace the precepts

and commands of Christ and the apostles ; and I have seen that the worst forms of irreligion and immorality come along in the immediate track of such a religion of mere enthusiasm. The authority of Christ is no part of the gospel of such zealots.

They do not come before men with a plea of divine authority ; they do not, in the name of the Lord, command sinners to repent. Christ is not the centre and source of their religion. His authority is not recognized by them. Having "a good time" is with them a thousand times more important than giving honor to Christ. Mixed with their zeal is not found a supreme regard for *right*. They will pour malignant wrong and fiendish injustice upon such as, from reverence to divine authority, cannot join in their wild religious mania. Their religion is a system without a central sun. It owns no authority, no sun of righteousness. Righteousness is not a word of meaning in its vocabulary.

Righteousness is *rightness*. To be right, as far as men can be right, is by following the exact rule of right, or to be absolved from the guilt of wrong. The righteousness of Christ was different from the righteousness of the law of Moses. Those who implicitly obeyed the commands and obligations of the law were called righteous. Thus, Zachariah and Elizabeth, the father and mother of John the Baptist, were declared to be "both righteous before God," and the explanation of their righteousness was that they were "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

There was, then, under the law of Moses, a rule of righteousness. It was altogether in external observ-

ances. Faith in God was not required in order to the observance of those commands. They were with propriety called *works* — “the works of the law.”

Before the giving of the law, with the father of those to whom that law of works was given there was another idea of righteousness. It was said of Abraham that “he believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness.” This was submission to God, which included the mind and heart, as well as external obedience.

The righteousness of Christ, or the righteousness which is by faith in Christ, includes the whole of Abraham’s righteousness, as well as that of the Mosaic dispensation, and yet, in addition, justification from the past offences of life.

There is no idea of righteousness which has belonged to any of the divine dispensations that is not included in what is required under Christ as the “Sun of Righteousness.”

Partial and limited views of Christian righteousness have too often dishonored the name of Christianity. With some, moral rectitude has been declared the sum of Christian righteousness. With others, the observance of that social law of doing by others as we would have them do by us. With others, there is no principle of right acknowledged but policy or cunning craft, which has no connection with Christianity. Others, it appears, repudiate all ideas of moral righteousness and social righteousness, to maintain as the exclusive idea of Christianity the righteousness of faith. With others still, there is no other idea of righteousness than *forgiveness of sins*. Another class might

be mentioned whose only idea of Christian righteousness seems to be to feel happy in religion.

The last-named of these classes, or their theories, will receive only a passing notice. It is certain that there is "great peace" to those who love the law of God. It is certain that true Christians have sometimes much "joy in the Holy Ghost." But it does not follow, by any means, that the joys of enthusiastic devotion must be ascribed to the divine Spirit. It does not follow that the happy delusions of corrupt men and women are to be attributed to the Spirit of God.

Political morality, or the morals of mere policy, is only the righteousness of success. Nothing is more foreign to Christianity than the justification of mere policy — a scheming for success. The diplomacy of nations is utterly disgraceful to every Christian principle. It is the systematic lying and cheating of governments. A thorough politician, a man whose righteousness allows tricks, expedients, and arts of deception, for sake of securing success to his schemes, sinks away down an infinite distance below the favorable recognition of Christ. Yet it would appear almost that the whole world believed in the righteousness of chicanery, the virtue of success. Rascals succeed in gaining wealth and power, and the world is ready almost to deify them, for no other reason than that they accomplish success. And what a reproach it is to any man, before this wicked world's judgment tribunal, to be unsuccessful in any effort!

In all the life and labor of Jesus, there was never seen, for one moment, any mere scheming for success. He played no tricks. He used no oily arts to lubricate the bearings of society and secure success. O, Jesus!

Blessed Master! Thou wert unsuccessful in the world's esteem, yet we give Thee glory; for, though thou wast humbled, thou hast been highly exalted by the Father! We bless thee, for true and righteous are all thy ways!

The transgression of any moral precept or religious ordinance of the Bible is sin. No man, therefore, can be righteous without observing these. Even Jesus, when John the Baptist objected to baptizing him, said, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

It is due to God, in reverence and submission, that every ordinance which he has given should be faithfully and cheerfully observed. Those who refuse submission both dishonor his wisdom and trample upon his authority. Those who take it upon them to call his ordinances *non-essential* do no better than to call God foolish. It is unrighteous, it is impious. How shall a man profess to believe in God, and then sit in judgment upon his doings in such a manner!

The moral precepts of Christ are very numerous. They are not arbitrary laws. They are based upon the natural necessities of our race, and the fitness of things. Every transgression of them is alike a sin against God, against man, and against the best interests of the actor. The observance of each and every one of them is necessary to the moral harmony of the universe — God, angels, and men.

Were a single planet to be thrown out of its orbit, it would disturb the order of the heavens. The arrangements of God for his moral government are not less positive, or precise, than those by which he balances spheres, and drives the planets in their endless circles.

Take, for example, the moral truths contained in the sermon on the mount. What a holy harmony would prevail in the world if these moral precepts were fully observed! And think, too, of the hopeless impossibility of harmony in the world so long as those moral precepts are left unstudied and unbeyed! He who will neglect to study them, or, studying, neglect to obey them, can never partake of Christian righteousness.

We may look through the whole catalogue of moral obligations imposed by the authority of Christ, and we shall find that they underlie all the reasonable hopes of man for even a worthy and consistent mortal existence. In defiance of their authority, and in disregard of their deep significance, almost the whole race are living, including a fearfully large portion of professed Christians, as well as avowed infidels.

Partial, limited and false ideas of Christian righteousness have prevailed, and do still prevail. The Sun of the Christian heavens has been eclipsed. Its light is not reflected upon the world by the church, even though it is clear in the Gospel. Christian truth comes too often before the world crippled and cramped by gag-laws which have been imposed upon the pulpit. The great moral truths, which should have been preached in the hearing of the church with bold and earnest faithfulness and love, have been left unnoticed, or their points have been crushed by apologies for the very crimes which they plainly condemn.

The hand and the tongue remain alike untamed with the many, while too few, in these things, let their light so shine that men may see their good works, and give the honor to our heavenly Father.

Under the present obscurity of Christian morals, many profess faith in Christ, and flatter themselves that they are ticketed through to heaven, yet remain so far from Christian righteousness that honest men, wherever they behold them, observe a narrow meanness to characterize their common and every-day moral conduct.

It is painful, exceedingly painful, to note the evils of the church. But I am left no other choice than to pass over these evils in silence, and thus seem to deny them, and justify the neglect of Christian righteousness, as though it were righteous, or I must perform the very painful duty of denouncing them. I must vindicate the honor of Christ, let men say what they will. And I know that very little attention is paid, in the church, to the promotion of the great moral principles which are connected with Christian righteousness. Yet every rule of Christ must be observed and honored, or we cease to treat him as the "Sun of Righteousness," as "one having authority."

The obligations of social righteousness which Jesus taught and imposed were of two classes, — those which related to all the world, and those which related to Christian brotherhood. The first great principle of social righteousness was that a person should do by all others as he would that they should do by him. This is a relative duty, inferior to moral obligations, because it measures duty by human interest, but no less binding upon all who admit the authority of Christ. In some circumstances a man may do strictly as he would be done by in like circumstances, and do that which would not be morally right, as measured by the moral precepts of Christ. Consequently I say that the rule

itself is inferior to the moral precepts of Christ, and must be applied within the bounds of their application. And how important to society is such a rule of action! And how positively true, also, it is that any person who does not act faithfully upon this rule, in reference to all classes of men, and men of all classes, falls short of Christian righteousness!

With sadness, men of true Christian faith and understanding contemplate the general disregard of this great social precept. Christianity, in the prime principles of social character, is very generally disregarded by its professors. It is so much so that, at every step in our business intercourse with professors as well as others, we are tricked and cheated, unless we watch to avoid it. There are those who seek to maintain this social obligation of Christian righteousness; but all candid men must acknowledge that the general looseness of even professed Christians forbids us to trust men where they could injure us; unless we have first proved them to be men devoted to the principles of Christian right, in defiance of consequences.

The social obligations or rules of Christian brotherhood were very extraordinary in their depth and application. Jesus presented a claim upon all his disciples for their highest love. "He was not ashamed to call them brethren." He proved his deep love to them by what he did and what he suffered for them. He loved them more than he loved his life. He commanded them to love one another as he had loved them. The rule is one of social Christian righteousness. It is binding upon each one of all who profess to be his disciples towards every other one who bears the name of Christ. He who refuses that deep and practical love

to all who follow Christ is a sinner. He falls short of Christian righteousness.

Sectarian systems have partitioned off the affections of God's people, and given countenance to hatred where love was required. They have set at naught the social obligations of righteousness, and taught hatred, for the liberty, perhaps the unavoidable necessity, of different opinions. It is sinful; and no man can put away his brother in Christ for differences of opinion without invading his soul-rights, and sinning against the highest authority in heaven or earth. It is also a sin against the Spirit of God, which is love. It is a sin against the only bond which ever could, or ever can, give strength and efficiency to the church of Christ.

The man whose life's service and love is denied to Christian men, because they may be so unfortunate as not to be able to hold honestly his views upon all important subjects, falls very far below the standard of Christian righteousness.

Again, the righteousness of Christ, or Christian righteousness, is by faith. It is sometimes called the righteousness of faith, or "the righteousness which is by faith."

When God approved the faith of Abraham and reckoned it to him for righteousness, Abraham believed a very hard promise. It was as hard to believe as the most difficult promise that Jesus ever gave. Yet Abraham believed it precisely as God made it, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness.

When God sent his Son into the world he took out of the way every circumstance of outward dependence, — placed everything in the attitude of severe difficulty, — and then, just as in the case of Abraham, demanded

faith in his own word. So, to believe unwaveringly every promise of God through Christ, to trust entirely to him for guidance in duty, and for salvation, is necessary to Christian righteousness. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The intellectual acknowledgment of the soundest creed ever contrived by man is of no consequence, if that is all. But the faith of that man who leans upon Christ continually, and obeys God implicitly, and in love, is worth everything to his soul, even though his errors of opinion may be innumerable.

God requires of men to honor his veracity. He who will not rely upon God's hardest promises dishonors the veracity of God. He who cannot trust God, even when the Lord seems to have a very difficult work to do, does not believe in Him at all. He believes only in the power of favorable circumstances.

Those who must always be encouraged by outward circumstances of a favorable kind have not the faith which Abraham had. If the wife of Abraham had been a young woman, and God had said to him, "Abraham, your wife shall bear you a son," it would not have been difficult for him to think it true. He might have sat down upon a stone, and talked with himself in this way: "Now, my wife, Sarah, is a smart, healthy, young woman, and I don't see anything why she may not bear me a son. So I guess the promise will prove true."

In *faith*, the mind always *labors* and wears against some difficulty. There is always *work* in believing. It is not the work of the hand, nor of the tongue, nor altogether of the intellect or head. The heart works. The promise of God, or the proposition, must be diffi-

cult. Then it becomes like a living seed. It germinates in the heart, and throws out its roots. They work away down into the soil of the heart, and get good anchor-hold there, and then they give growth upward and outward.

Now, the faith which God justifies, the faith which is necessary to Christian righteousness, is the faith which makes nothing of difficulties, because "Father is at the helm;" the faith which knows no difficulty in anything, if God has undertaken it, or given a promise of success. The faith which goes mincing and simpering after worldly helps to fulfil the promises of God is not that which is requisite to Christian righteousness. It is good for nothing. It is worth no more to the soul than a ray of moonlight is for a walking-staff.

Christ, as the Sun of Righteousness, justifies none as righteous but those who trust entirely to his wisdom and power, and who fear no difficulties where he leads or directs his people.

All the promises and propositions of Christ to his disciples were difficult of accomplishment, and, to worldly calculators, impossible. His own resurrection from the grave, the spread of the Gospel, his second coming, the final resurrection of the dead, and the eternal joy or sorrow of men, were difficult things to believe. Some of them are now, and timid men stumble over them, and fall with their heads downwards. They cannot believe, because there are difficulties in the way. But the faith which is required by Christ is faith which will, in the name of the Lord, look difficulties out of countenance, and go forward at his command.

Another idea of Christian righteousness is that con-

dition of forgiveness and justification in which every one is who is really accepted of God. The soul, when it first believes in God, has its first great difficulty right at home. The sins of a past life are seen to be very many, and very great. God offers forgiveness to all who will believe in him and turn to him. Can he do it? Can God forgive so great a sinner? How the poor penitent writhes under this terrible difficulty! Again he looks through the secret chambers of his soul, and all is dark and gloomy there. He can find nothing wherewith to balance the fearful account against him which he acknowledges. Can God forgive such a sinner? Christ tells him that he came into the world just to do that very thing for sinners. And he tells that sinner to leave his sins with the Lord, and go in peace and sin no more. He sins as long as he distrusts God. The moment he trusts all to Him, and says, "Let me have a servant's place," he knows the first victory of faith.

This first conflict in all minds is not alike. But it is the same in substance.

The sinner who turns at the call of the Lord, and submits to him with a believing heart, is brought into a condition of forgiveness on account of his faith in Christ. In ceasing to sin, he becomes, of necessity, obedient to all the commands of God, so far as it is possible for him.

It is not possible for any ignorant, sinful person to become at once fully acquainted with all the positive requisitions of duty, of Christian righteousness, as contained in the Scriptures. The new believer becomes a disciple of Christ. He learns. He searches the Scriptures, and seeks the knowledge of God. In his

ignorance, while he seeks the right way, he often gets into the wrong. But the blood of the covenant where-with he was sanctified is his assurance of forgiveness. He is accounted righteous while he seeks truth and right with all his heart.

The Sun of Righteousness is shining with a clear and blessed light. Its beams are truly life-giving. They penetrate to the very souls of men. There is light, and health, and joy, where there was darkness, and disease, and sorrow.

Let our little earth set up rebellion against the appointed order of things, and blot the shining sun out of the heavens. Inevitable consequences would follow. Immediate darkness, with all its gloom, would cover the face of the earth, and the chills of death would be felt by all living things, the final result of which would be eternal frost and changeless chains. A million of astronomers might stand upon a million of different worlds, with their telescopes scanning the heavens in search of the darkened earth; but to every eye it would be *lost*. Could they make telegraph-posts of the stars, and rush an inquiring message through the universe upon the electric wires, the voice from star to star, from world to world, in answer concerning the earth, would only be, and that forever, "*Lost, Lostr, LOST.*"

Even so, could the men of this world blot our moral Sun from its sphere, darkness and gloom would come over all things. Men might go forth in vain to seek some controlling power to regulate the maddened and disorderly elements, but none would be found. There is really no other moral system known to the world sustained by any plea of authority. There is no other religious system the central spring of which is love.

All other religious systems, which have had much influence in the world, have waded through the blood of slaughtered foes. But never has Christianity sanctioned one of the wrongs which men have committed in its name. Not an infidel, nor even a persecutor, has ever been wronged in person, property, or reputation, in this world, by the application of any Christian principle.

There never was a man in the world who did not become a better man, a better friend, a better neighbor, a better father, a better brother, or a better son, the more he became like Jesus of Nazareth.

May all clouds and mists be chased away from our moral heavens, that the Sun of Righteousness may shine clearly and without obstruction, until the earth shall be gladdened, and all its tribes and families become harmonious in purity and love!

DISCOURSE IV.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

“They that are whole need not a PHYSICIAN ; but they that are sick.”

Luke 5 : 31.

“It is a figure of speech — surely it is a figure of speech,” says a world of commentators. Christ is, as the destroyer of moral evil, a physician in that sense. This all religious teachers are teaching everywhere. This I would affirm, and more than this.

The labors of Christ, when he was on earth, were by no means limited to soul-curing. He was the greatest healer of diseases which the world has ever seen.

Christianity was not designed merely for soul-curing. Under its correcting and healing power, that desirable condition was to be brought about in which the true subjects of the divine administration were to endure in this mortal state like the cedars of Lebanon. Then the days of God’s people would be like the days of a tree, and one a hundred years old should be regarded as yet a child, and one who should die at a hundred years old should be reckoned accursed because he died so young.

Certainly, such a time, and such a condition of the people of God, has been a subject of prophecy. The

features of that time are alike dissimilar to those of the immortal state, and to those of the present state, in which gray hairs almost crowd upon the heads of children, and death seizes a majority of all before they have counted a score of years, and in which the lifetime of the oldest flies away with the speed of a weaver's shuttle.

Christianity, properly understood in its principles, application, and designs, will be esteemed the matchless sanative for a diseased and fallen race. And never, until its principles are more fully studied, and more faithfully applied, can a final check be put upon the hurried march which men are now making towards the grave.

Disease and death now seem to be our common inheritance. All around us we see the fading cheeks of children. The wan, the emaciated, the festering, and the bloated, meet our eyes at every turn. The flower and the frost of life have come together. The man we call an *old* man is the very man who looks back over life's few stepping-stones, and sees it but as yesterday when he got out of the little cradle. He is an astonishment to himself, and while he asks "What is life?" he laughs deliriously to think that while he stood by his cradle, scanning the cunning contrivance of its rockers, he grew to be a man; and while he occupied himself in measuring and estimating the material of which the ark of his first earthly condition was made, he faded away into old age. Such, comparatively, is our present race.

Everywhere we go, we find funerals; although nobody has lived long enough to be much of a historian in himself. Everywhere we hear the professed

preachers of the Gospel telling the people that death is abroad in the land, riding upon every breeze. Everybody knows it, and must very soon feel the power of it. But the preachers seldom hint to the people that *sin* is now reigning unto death; that disregard of Christian truth among professed Christians and the children of the world is bearing down the body of humanity into this gloomy gulf.

Theological schools are designed only to teach theology. It needs the school of Scripture to teach the truths of Scripture, and the school of common sense to teach men common sense. I wish not to be censorious against men of any class or kind; for I am a victim of the sweeping hurry, and soon shall end my march of life.

Everywhere disease is indicated by the looks and motions of living men and women. There is no mistake. Every one is sick. There is no such thing as health. Pains are piercing the very marrow-bones of men. Hot fever-flashes come streaming up through all the frame-work of the body, and melt away the bearings of the wheels of life. In this condition nothing can endure. The young man who starts out in the morning in the noblest form of manly life may come at evening, cold, and borne upon the shoulders of the mourners. The blooming maiden, a picture of all that speaks of health and loveliness, may go to make her cheerful morning calls, and yet, at early noon, be seen a coffined corse. The young and loving mother and her darling, hopeful child go to the grave together, and are sleeping in the same coffin.

Preachers may waste their words upon the wonders of these mysterious providences. I shall speak — the

Lord permitting — of the pollutions which promote this state of living death, and which now desolate the earth. I would speak of Jesus Christ, the Great Physician. He must heal us, or we shall never know a cure.

Man is composed of matter and mind. Earth and spirit is all there is of him. His diseases attach to matter or to mind : perhaps to both. There are no diseases, except in spirituality or materiality, in mind or in matter.

Diseases originating in *mental conditions* are not within the province of material agents, except so far as their *effects* are to be regarded as diseases. They are not, therefore, to be cured by the drugs of the apothecary. The greater portion of diseases probably partake of this character. The only possible remedy of such diseases is in the permanent correction and relief of that moral, religious, or social condition of the mind, which is not merely the cause of disease, but *disease itself*.

There are innumerable cases of disease, which go under the name of consumption, where the real disease is a condition of the mind. It is a hopeless task for him who knows no medicine but drugs ; but there is a prescription in the Gospel of Christ which is fully adequate to the cure of that disease, if an application can be made. There are multitudes of persons who are too delicately formed, have too active sensibilities, to bear all the cheatings and crossings, the bangings and abuse, of this wicked world and its ways, unless they are comforted daily by Christ, and those who can act as he acted. It is nonsense, it is a perfect mockery of sense, to apply to a drug-dealer to

mend up a crushed spirit. A little Christian love, dealt out by Christian hands, would do more for such a case, ten thousand times more, than all the doctors who ever dealt out doses. Yet such diseases do kill their thousands every year; and it is a subject of grave and wondering remark why the ways of Providence are so mysterious — that “such a person’s disease should baffle the skill of the ablest physicians!” When Christianity shall be properly understood, and faithfully practised, such cases will be found quite curable. Then the doctors will perhaps say of such, “Nothing ailed them.” But now that they die by thousands under the administration of drugs, and their death is a positive testimony, it is admitted that there is something more of it than a delusive supposition of being sick.

What is it which makes politicians and men of business grow gray so early? It is answered, “Mental anxiety.” Yes, that is true. And I assert further that there is no disease more destructive to human life than mental anxiety, in its usual operations. And, in the present state of the political, social, or business world, minds are kept upon a high pressure of mental anxiety continually. Even in the religious world, there is a tendency with most people to have perpetual fire or perpetual frost. Men are not satisfied with those onsets of the army of the Lord by which captives are taken, and the church built up; but they must carry every revival to a feverish frenzy, a perfect tornado of excitement and confusion, and keep up the battle by night and by day, until the constitutional health of many is completely broken and destroyed. Now, in the true spirit of Christian faith and love, a

person may become so deeply interested as to pray all night, sweetly calm and hopeful, or abstain, in a great measure, from food for days together, without any ill effect upon the health. It is *not* mental *anxiety*. It is rather spiritual desire. A true reliance upon God will keep off that fearful disease, *mental anxiety*, in such cases.

Many, to avoid these false revivals, undertake to carry on the whole work of Christianizing the world by the action of mind. They strain themselves almost to death, as though to give force to God's dull truth. There are two dangers to follow this. One is, such preachers strain themselves in study, or in speaking, or in other ways, until they crack. Then they cannot any longer endure the excitement of the ministry. If they had gone to work in a plain, common-sense way to preach the Gospel of Christ, and when there came a revival among the people called it their pool of Siloam, and jumped into it, they would doubtless have come out very well. But another evil of straining, in the manner I have spoken of, to carry on the cause of Christ without revivals, is that there is perpetual frost, until a change of seasons, or rather a change of generations, and people flee from refined nonsense to the truth and faith of Christ.

Mental excitement is not always mental anxiety. Faith, hope, and love, have little of anxiety about them. Mental anxiety comes principally from fear, or distrust — the very opposite of faith, hope, and love. The politician, if in full faith of success, would not grow gray in a night. And the man of business, were he not puzzled to bring to pass his schemes, would not go

to his place of trade with a sunken eye, a pallid face-and dishevelled hair.

In times of business panic there are many sudden deaths. Men die at their counters, or die in the streets. We are told that they die of heart-disease. I tell you that heart-disease is nothing more nor less, in its root, than *mental anxiety*.

In times of fierce political or other excitements, men who occupy annoying positions frequently drop down dead, suddenly. I have known many such cases. Mental anxiety killed them. There is no mistake about it. And if strong men, men in the full vigor of life, are killed in an instant by such a fearful disease, shall I be disputed when I say that more than one half of the people die before their time because of mental anxiety? Life is fearfully shortened, in almost all cases, by it. The whole world is straining, stretching, after something it fears that it shall not obtain! It is all anti-Christian. It is a fearful disease, and the whole world is dying of it. Moreover, it can never be cured by drugs. The prescriptions of the Great Physician for this disease are certain to cure when taken. Some of them are as follows: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

In all this Christ commanded his disciples to suppress that mental anxiety which the Gentiles, or the unbelieving world, allowed about a future supply of food and raiment; and, making it their first or great interest to advance his kingdom, and to practise righteousness, to rely fully upon the immediate and positive supply of their real wants from the hand of God. Now this was not a promise designed for and limited to the specially chosen disciples; for to them it was not fulfilled. Some of them did suffer need.

Christ forbids that perpetual "heart-disease," mental anxiety about eating, and drinking, and dressing, to all his faithful disciples.

In an early part of the same discourse, he also forbade that great "heart-disease," *covetousness*, with

equal force and point. He commanded, saying, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

So long as there is such a greedy grasping after money, and such anxiety for the accumulation of wealth, as reigns not only among the Gentiles, but among the Jews, and also among professed Christians, with both the rich and the poor, there will be a constant decline of the vital powers of life, from mental anxiety. The disease is almost universal. Honest men are cast down to poverty by sharpers. Anxiety is depicted upon the countenances of all but princely villains, and pious trusters in a faithful Providence. One has composure because he knows that his dishonest arts are fully successful; and the other because he trusts in God, who causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him. The multitude are filled with fear. They tremble at the thought of to-morrow. This fear is shortening life. It is a disease. None can cure it but Christ.

Christ's healing principles are fully set at naught in the general course of worldly business. Professed Christians, who set at naught his precepts, given to be observed by all of his disciples, are sinners of the deepest, darkest stain. They encourage, both by precept and example, this monster crime and evil, which carries in its fearful current disease and death. Besides, they are directly transgressors of the laws of Christ.

The disobedience of a reckless son, or the scandal of a shameless daughter, will cut years of time out of the life-lease of parents. It will cause them crushing anxiety and killing sorrow. The disease upon them is real ; but there is one Physician has power to heal.

Almost every variety of diseases, except those which are purely contagious, may be brought on by mental influences. The slanders, the oppressions, the frauds, the frowns, and the foolish fancies of mankind, create diseases, and desolate the earth. These diseases, when thus caused, are rooted in the mental constitution of man ; and there is nothing can cure them but the remedies which Christ proposes. The bodily effects have too long been treated as diseases, while the root has ever been beyond the reach of drugs.

Diseases which are only allied to matter are very few. They are also mostly simple. Not any comparative portion of the human family die of such diseases. There are a few. The number is very small. Science aids in tracing out all such diseases, and their remedies are established. All diseases which originate in matter require material applications for their cure.

Even the diseases which are seated in material nature are, most of them, in consequence of habits or customs which Christianity would displace.

Intemperance brings a thousand evils upon man in the form of disease. Yet what but Christian truth, Christian practice, and Christian love, is ever to remove intemperance from the world ?

Laws may be passed to punish intemperate men for their indulgence of appetite ; but still they will eat and drink to excess. Intemperance will continue, in defiance of every other prescription than that of Christ.

Men will seek artificial stimulants until they come to be more stimulated by the faith, and hope, and love, which Christ prescribes.

Even here, I ought to maintain that intemperance comes, to a great degree, from mental disease. And that disease is sadness and discouragement. Let true Christian kindness be the spirit of society, and the desire for stimulating meats and drinks would cease, to a very great extent.

The diseases consequent upon intemperance would all be done away by a faithful application of the Great Physician's prescriptions to the intemperate, and to those who associate with and influence them. But professed Christians must practise Christianity, in its spirit and precepts, if they would see this great evil cured.

Men who go to confirmed drunkards with the spirit of love which brought Christ into the world are the only ones who can reclaim them. They want to know and feel that there is love for them, and that is the medicine for their cure.

In the business pursuits of the world, for sake of gain and wealth, men and women will live contrary to nature, and bring disease upon them. The tyranny and extortion of the covetous will compel the poor to live on filthy food, or in unfit habitations. This brings disease on them and on their posterity.

The innumerable exposures, wholly unnecessary to any virtuous state of community, to which the young are subjected, for fashion's sake, — how fearfully they contribute to the yearly bill of mortality! The Great Physician's prescriptions would remove all this.

The question will be asked, If Christianity is de-

signed to produce such a desirable effect, why does it effect no more in that way now? I shall answer, No remedy can be effectual for any cure until it has an application to the case.

To cure the world of its diseases, the church must first be Christianized. Its spirit, its habits, and its character, must be harmonious with that of Christ, and with the precepts of Christ.

While professed Christians can be satisfied with a form of Christianity, a profession and religious form, and cherish the spirit and impulsive arts and habits of covetousness, and run in the eager pursuit of gain, like infidels,—while they can participate in business combinations which practise extortion upon others, and join in the sinful excesses of the unbelieving, in fanciful and extravagant indulgences, and rejoice in their revellings and unrighteousness,—such a profession will do nothing to relieve the world of its diseases. It will perpetuate them.

Christianity must go out into men's lives more than it now does. There is perhaps none too much of the go-to-meeting character among professing Christians; but there is quite too little of anything else than a meeting-house or Sunday piety. I would again say there is none too much of the Sunday devotion, or the meeting-house piety; but there is quite too little of anything else.

Christ would go, in the person of his disciples, to visit the poor and the unfortunate, the sick and the imprisoned. He would carry his healing love to the heart of the wounded and bleeding. He requires of every one who takes his name upon him to reflect his character, in a constant service of truth. He would

have every disciple to seek the room of the suffering, to comfort them. He would have every Christian woman to be more active in such things than Roman "Sisters of Charity."

I am ashamed for the degeneracy and falseness of the Christian profession, when I think how the world gaped with astonishment at the sight of a noble English woman's benevolent efforts among suffering soldiers in a Crimean hospital, and how her worthy name was handed out to the world so much alone, when every Christian woman in all England, to be a true Christian, ought certainly to have the same spirit. I know that the very spirit of love, with which such an attending angel would move among the suffering and the sinking, would be the blest promise of life and healing to those who would have died in spite of all the doses of the best doctors who ever received a diploma.

Christians are not to be subjects of fear, but of love and a sound mind.

To remedy the diseases of the world, and extend the life-lease of our race, professors of Christianity must cease to bind themselves in debasing servitude to party. They must be sure to withhold countenance from every wrong. They must not be so wedded to party, in religion, or politics, or anything else, as to consent to the oppressions or wrongs which crush the hearts of men. It is their duty to lead the world to virtue and to life; not to be led in the service of corruption.

It is astonishing with what readiness the professed followers of Christ will follow party, when there is not a denomination or religious party in existence which

in its character would not absolutely disgrace the name of Christianity.

The character of Christ and of Christianity soars aloft, transcendently superior to every sect or party in existence. Any man who shuts himself down to a mere party measure is very near to denying Christianity.

It repudiates everything impure, unjust, or unkind, and pours its sunlight of truth upon the world "for the healing of the nations." It imposes upon believers an unremitting service of benevolence.

Christian love is the great medicine which is needed. Those who go and administer freely will find it a universal panacea. In every sick room, and in the world's great sick room, in order to the accomplishment of a perfect cure, those must be in attendance whose very voices will be melodious in love, whose movements will be gentle as the care of the Good Shepherd, and who can lay their hands so kindly upon the throbbing hearts of sufferers, that every sound, and every motion, and every touch, shall seem to echo or display an angel's ministry.

The church should be so separated from all the worthless and divisive schemes which now dishonor it, and so given up to goodness, charity, and love, that the hardest sinner would close his lips, in silent reverence, when its almoners and humanity-helpers were passing by; and so manifestly, in its administration of love and truth, "the tree of life from God," that the sick and dying of every nation and tribe would seek a place of refuge under its spreading branches, and the oppressed of every realm find invitation to stretch themselves under its shadow, and trust to God for safety.

DISCOURSE V.

LORD OF ALL.

“Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well ; for so I am.” — John 13 : 13.

ON the earth there are many who are called lords ; but to Christians everywhere there is one Lord, which is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He is Lord of the dead and of the living. He is Lord of all.

The prophet David foresaw the exaltation of Christ, and, speaking by the Spirit, called him *Lord*, saying, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.”

The title must have been more than an empty compliment in its original use among men. All titles are but significant words at first. They are counterfeit signs of ideas when they are only used as compliments. So, to call a mean man “His Excellency,” to call a man “Honorable” who has no honorable principle, to call a young man “Elder,” or to call a man of no extraordinary virtue “Reverend,” is to make a counterfeit use of words. So it would be to apply the title under consideration as a mere compliment.

The title describes one to whom others are wholly subject. It was said of the faithful wife of Abraham of old that “she obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.”

Perhaps the faithful Sarah, whom the Scriptures present to us as a pattern of wives, would be considered a very silly sister by the advocates of extraordinary social revolutions in our times. Be that as it may, the language used by her shows distinctly that she regarded her husband as the rightful head of the house.

“Why call ye me Lord, Lord,” said Jesus, “and do not the things which I say?” And again, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” By such language he taught men to regard the significance of the title which they gave, and to act accordingly, or all the titles they might give him would be nothing to their credit in the kingdom of heaven.

The Lord had said, through the prophet Isaiah, “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall men say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.” By this it is seen that the most solemn and awful affirmation had been made in heaven that *all men* should be required to bow the knee to the Lord. It was also distinctly implied that some would be incensed against him, but God would make them ashamed.

The apostle Paul said to the Philippians, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and

was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This language is clearly equivalent to the declaration that he is Lord of both the dead and the living. The “ things under the earth ” unquestionably refers to the dead, or the spirits of those who are in the grave.

The appointment of Jesus to kingly power is traced through a fleshly descent from David. But his Lordship is not to be thus traced. When Jesus demanded of the Jews, “ If David in spirit called him Lord, how is he then his son ? ” they were confounded, and knew not how to answer. The question was full of perplexity to them.

The disciples had known Jesus after the flesh. They had known him of the tribe of Jesse, as the son of David, and as the son of Mary. But the time came with them that these indications of greatness ceased to be of consequence, when they knew him by the Spirit as Lord of the dead and living. Then they could justify their earnest devotion to the service of Christ, and their fervent appeals to men, with the declaration, “ For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth

know we no man after the flesh ; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature ; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

This idea of a "new creature" includes that of a new creation ; that is, of "being created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works," as the apostle Paul expressed it. Christ was the Lord of that creation ; as Adam was lord over the old creation, or that of flesh and blood, and received as his subjects beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea, to be entirely at his disposal.

All things were put in subjection to the spiritual Lord, which included spirits in every form of their being ; and he was given a perfect right of dominion over them, whether angels, or spirits, or men. The duty and the destiny of all is decided by him. From his decision there is no possibility of appeal. His power and dominion is above earthly lords and kings, so that he is "King of kings and Lord of lords."

No man in his animal nature acknowledges Jesus as his Lord. The natural or animal man can have no knowledge of spiritual things ; because spirits only understand spirits and spiritual things. "Wherefore," says the apostle Paul, "I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It is, then, by a divine nature, or, in other words, as truly the Son of God, that Jesus Christ is Lord both of the dead and living.

We may properly consider the power of his Lordship over men, and then over spirits. It has already

been said that the relation implied absolute dominion on the part of a lord, to unconditional submission on the part of a servant. So it was and is in relation to men. He who will properly call Jesus his Lord must be subject to all his commands. He must live only to honor and serve his Master. He must not for a moment suppose that Jesus is his Lord, if he does not make it the constant end and aim of his life to observe all the rules of piety and humanity which Jesus gave. If he suffers evil in return for his faithfulness, he is not to suppose that his lot is an extraordinary one. Jesus had been accused of an alliance with the very prince of evil spirits. He charged his disciples to remember that a servant had no reason to expect better treatment than his lord received. "A servant," said he, "is not greater than his lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of his household!"

All the decisions which he had given upon controverted questions, and all the precepts and laws which he had given for the government of men, had been without the least accommodation to the carnal passions of men. Those who considered themselves the good and the righteous of that age felt themselves accused by him of so many crimes, and such as he declared would exclude them from the kingdom of God, that they were filled with the very bitterness of anger towards him, and accused him in return of being possessed of a devil.

He taught his disciples that evil treatment, which people were accustomed, and properly, too, to call persecution, was to be expected, as a natural consequence, from those to whom the doctrine of the cross was

offensive. The carnal mind was enmity against God. It is so still. It never can be otherwise than that the mind which is influenced by the passions of the flesh must be enmity against God.

Jesus, in the most plain and impressive manner, condemned the common usages of those who thought themselves God's people, and offered no apology nor excuse for them. He took the Pharisees, who were unquestionably the most religious people at that time in the world, and to them described their careful attention to the formalities of a ritual and formal religion, while through covetousness they found an excuse to plunder the poor and neglect the needy, in such a manner that they could not escape ; and in their anger they anxiously desired to kill him. It is not certain that those Pharisees were worse than men of other times. It is certain that Jesus gave his hearers such a perfect description of themselves as no class of worldly professors ever listened to with pleasure.

Our Lord was under no obligation to take any of his servants into the knowledge of all his plans ; but he saw fit to honor a few of his disciples by this superior elevation. "Henceforth," said he to them, "I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth ; but I have called you *friends* ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

The true servants of Christ will find enough to do, for a lifetime, to make themselves acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, and reduce those holy principles to practice. But if some gifted and bold minister of truth should, with fervent zeal and earnest anxiety for the salvation of men, represent to the professed people of

God at this time how far they are from practising according to the Saviour's pattern, is there not ground to fear that too many of our pulpits would be suddenly closed against him? It is an important question, Is the church of Christ free from the covetousness so justly condemned in the Pharisees? Do no men in the church make void the laws of God through covetousness? What means the buying and selling of men in the market? Is it for benevolence, or covetousness? What means the turning of Christian widows and orphans upon the cold charities of the world? Are the charities of the church colder than those of the world? What means the driving of earnest, faithful ministers of Christ from place to place, poor, penniless, and unpitied? The Lord will require his servants to answer for these things, and for very many others. He will not approbate in his professed servants what he condemned in the Pharisees. His servants must strive to be as their Master.

To submit to all the rules of Christ, just as he gave them, is the work of a *servant*. If we truly receive Christ as our Lord, we shall obey him. To have some kind of a religion is what he has never required of us. He has given us his laws and ordinances. We must observe them. In our duties of devotion, in the duty of charity, in our duties to the church and to the world, in everything, we must be followers of Christ. To live to please ourselves, is to deny Christ.

We must also consider Christ's Lordship over the dead and over angels. All power in heaven and in the earth was given to him. All things in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, were to own him as Lord.

The angels of God are the subjects of his government; for all things in heaven are made subject to him. They are not governed by an eternal and unchangeable *necessity*. The government of heaven is not arbitrary compulsion. There is liberty and power of choice there. If it were not so, angels could not sin. But angels have sinned. We are told by an apostle that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." Yet we are taught that the right of dominion which Christ possesses is "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." It is also declared that he was "before all things, and by him all things consist."

There has been rebellion among the angels of God. We may judge, however, that among the angels of God obedience is the rule, and rebellion the exception, as it is evident that among men disobedience is the general rule, and obedience to God the exception. The Scriptures speak of "evil angels," and of "the devil and his angels." But over all Christ is given the right of dominion. The course of Satan and his angels is that of deliberate hostility to the government of Christ, in the visible world and in the world of spirits.

The apostles inform us that Christ spake through the prophets, or that the spirit of Christ which was in the prophets bore testimony, and that by his spirit he went and preached through Noah, before the flood. Yet he was so much superior to the angels, that he, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they, which was the name of God, by being acknowl-

edged his Son. "For to which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee?"

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a multitude of the heavenly host broke out in strains which were heard by mortals. At the close of his temptation, angels came and ministered to him. When he prayed in the mountain, the spirits of Moses and Elijah were with him. When he prayed in an agony in the garden, an angel hurried from heaven to strengthen him. When his body had lain the appointed time in the grave, the angels of God, clothed as with the lightnings, descended to roll back the stone. Numberless almost were the instances in which the angels spake in the ears of the sleeping, communicating to them through dreams what was to take place.

The angels of God own Jesus Christ as their Lord. They watch over the way of his servants; they treasure up the prayers of the truly pious, and they execute his will in answer to prayer, in the fulfilment of prophecy, and in all the events of Providence.

It has also been declared that "things under the earth" should own him Lord. This expression, as I understand it, is simply an allusion to the spirits of those whose bodies are in the grave. Those spirits were to own him Lord, as men and angels were, not necessarily and unanimously, but in obedience to his government. If so, the true servants of Christ will continue in his service, without intermission, eternally. At least, the death of the body will not prevent it.

The spirits of men are separated from the body at death. The apostle James says that "the body without the spirit is dead." This affirms a separation.

When Jesus died upon the cross, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." His spirit was not to remain with the body. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He did not suppose his spirit was to remain in the body. The dying thief was told by Jesus, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Paradise, as understood by the Jews, was not a state of unconscious death. When Jesus raised up the daughter of Jairus, it is said that "her spirit came again, and she arose straightway." When the poor beggar Lazarus died, and the rich and covetous man died also, they were both represented as being alive in spirit; one wretched, and the other in Paradise, or Abraham's bosom. Their spirits did not go with their bodies to wait until the end of time there. When the prophet Elijah had three times prayed to his God for the resurrection of the widow's son, saying, "O Lord my God, let this child's soul come into him again," it is said, "And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." All these things show a separation of the spirit from the body at death. The apostle Paul desired to depart and be with Christ.

When Jesus approached his disciples, walking on the sea, they supposed they had seen a spirit, and were terrified. He calmed their fears, but hinted no denial of the existence of spirits separate from their bodies. When he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, they were terrified again with the supposition of having seen a spirit. He relieved their fears, but in no way denied the existence of spirits, but said, "A spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see

me have." When the disciples who were with Jesus at his transfiguration saw Moses and Elias with him, they certainly saw a spirit; for Moses had died and been buried, and no one had been then raised from the dead. When Jesus debated with the Sadducees, who denied both the existence of spirits and also the resurrection of the body, he declared that their doctrine was disproved by what God said to Moses, that he was the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; because God was the God only of the living, for all live unto him; and he fully declared the existence of spirits, separate from their bodies. All the Pharisees held to the existence of spirits, separate from the bodies of the dead. Jesus and Paul both distinctly acquiesced in those views.

The apostle Paul spake of a man, doubtless himself, who had been taken up to the third heavens, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell. And the same apostle rejoiced that the saints had come to a communion with the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names were written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect. Jesus warned his disciples to take heed not to despise one of the little ones which believed in him, because in heaven their angels, said he, do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. The saints had come, according to Paul, to an innumerable company of angels, as well as to the spirits of the just. When Peter was imprisoned for the Gospel's sake, an angel opened the prison-doors and brought them out. When they were informed at the house to which he went that Peter stood at the gate, some of them said, "It is his angel."

God gave to angels power to shake the earth. When the Law was given from Mount Sinai "by the disposition of angels," there was a terrible earthquake. When the Jews crucified Jesus the angels of God were witnesses to the outrage, and they shook the earth so that the bosoms of solid rocks burst asunder, and the vail of the temple was rent in twain, the rocks rent, and the graves were opened. On the morning of the first day of the week, "behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre" where Jesus lay, "and sat upon it." When Paul and Silas were thrown into the Philippian prison, the angels of God did not desert them. At midnight they sung praises to God. And what came next? "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." But who did this work of opening doors, and throwing off the bands? It certainly was not the jailer. It was the work which the angel did at Jerusalem, when Peter was liberated. O, what will be the scene when the Lord himself shall come with ten thousands of his angels, to shake terribly the earth!

The spirits in the unseen world, we learn from facts narrated in the Scriptures, are differently classed and divided. The spirits of the holy and good are employed in the service of Christ, while evil spirits, or the spirits of evil men, are promoting everything wicked, with the evil angels.

When John was about to fall down before the angel in the isle of Patmos, to worship him, the angel com-

manded him to desist, and declared to him that he was only a fellow-servant, and of his brethren the prophets. This angel, then, was but the spirit of one of the earlier prophets, now subject to the wishes of John, in giving him a knowledge of what was afterward to take place. While Cornelius, the Centurion of Cesarea, prayed, an angel appeared to him, and directed him to send to Joppa for one Simon, whose surname was Peter. The next day the men who were sent reached the place. Knowing nothing of it, Peter was upon the house-top, praying. He had a vision three times repeated. A voice spake to him, but no one was visible to him. This voice is ascribed to a spirit. It was the same one who had made himself visible to Cornelius. For, as he told Peter of the three men who had come after him, he declared that he himself had sent them. When apostles prayed for divine assistance, it is said that the place where they were was shaken. It was the power of those invisible beings who came to the praying place of the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, with the sound of a rushing mighty wind. The spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets. Holy and good spirits helped the servants of Christ. They came to their assistance, in answer to prayer.

Wicked spirits took up their abode in wicked men, especially in such as were diseased. Jesus gave his apostles power to expel them from those who were possessed. These evil spirits were called demons. In our translation of the Scriptures they are called devils.

The Saviour cast out many of them. Out of Mary Magdalene he expelled seven. These spirits, in some instances, spake through the ones they possessed, as in the case of the one at Capernaum, mentioned by Luke,

who cried out to Jesus with a loud voice, in the synagogue, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God." Also in the demoniac which is mentioned by Mark as dwelling in the country of the Gadarenes, who had his dwelling in the tombs, and who exercised more than the strength of a mortal man, so that the strongest fetters that men could put upon him were broken by him. This extraordinary strength is not the result or effect of disease. Disease weakens. If good spirits have power to shake the mountains, evil spirits may have power also to work strange things.

There are those who deny the existence and power of spirits over men, and over material substances. I had almost said they believe that nature works without a God. But they do not confess themselves Atheists. They profess to believe in God and in the Bible. But they say that the language which Jesus and the apostles and evangelists employed in reference to demons, or spirits, is only an accommodation of their style to the notions of their times. This is charging Jesus and his apostles with deception, with acting the part of impostors. Nothing is more certain than that there was a general belief in the existence and activity of evil spirits when Jesus appeared. It was so among other nations, as well as the Jews. He never contradicted the idea in any way. By his teaching and his actions he fully sanctioned the idea as correct. It is therefore true, or he was an impostor. The apostles and evangelists can be understood in no other way than as fully sustaining the belief which was then general concerning the action of demons or spirits. They

affirm distinctly that men were possessed of evil spirits. They distinctly separate the power of expelling evil spirits from the curing of diseases. They represent those spirits as aggravating the diseases and misfortunes of men. They represent Jesus as talking with spirits, which cannot be understood but with the idea that they really existed as persons.

There were among the Jews those who professed to cast out demons, called exorcists. This fact itself shows the belief of the people in demoniacal possession. The Jews saw the power of Jesus to expel them by commanding them to come out of the men. "And demons came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God." Thus the spirits obeyed him. "And he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak; for they knew that he was Christ." Then the Jews, being forced to acknowledge his power, exclaimed, "He casteth out demons, or devils, by the prince of the devils." But he, referring to those among them who professed to do the same, said, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?" They were driven from the argument.

One of the evangelists was a physician, and he certainly could not have confounded demoniacal possession with mere diseases. In one instance he speaks of the expulsion of a demon, or evil spirit, and says that the devil came out of him, and hurt him not. Shall we suppose Luke to have used such senseless language concerning a disease as that it left a man without hurting him? It is too absurd.

There were magicians in Egypt who strove hard to match Moses in his miracles. There were such also in

Babylon, in Daniel's time. There were diviners, conjurers, false prophets, witches, in different countries, and there are now. Most of their operations have been performed by the aid of evil spirits, who have sought to hide and defeat the power of the true God. They have counterfeited everything that God has ever provided for the guidance of men, even down to the consolations of religion. Men everywhere, who do not love the cross of Christ, receive these counterfeits, and rest satisfied with them.

Paul encountered a damsel at Philippi who had a spirit of Python, "who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." She knew Paul and Silas, at a glance, and followed them, crying, "These men are servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." But Paul said to the spirit of which she was possessed, "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." Now, Paul did not command the damsel to come out of herself. Her masters were highly enraged with Paul and Silas, and got them cast into prison. But the Lord helped them out.

At Ephesus Paul was greatly assisted. Many and wonderful were the miracles which were performed. Evil spirits went out of many. Then Jewish vagabonds, exorcists, undertook to counterfeit the use of the name of the Lord, to cast out an evil spirit. They said to the spirit, "We adjure thee, by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." But the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" And the demoniac sprang upon the fellows, and tore their clothes off from them, and handled them with such severity that they fled from them naked and

bruised. They knew Jesus as Lord, and Paul as his apostle. But they would not acknowledge the power of such fellows.

The evangelists tell us that the demons knew Jesus, and cried out to him in fear, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" And the apostle James says, "The demons believe and tremble." All spirits recognize Jesus Christ as Lord; but all do not submit to him, either in the body or out of the body. With authority and power he commanded the unclean spirits to depart out of living men, and they obeyed him.

The possession of spirits, and the power of evil spirits, has not been confined to the Jews nor to Judea. We are told in the writings of the evangelists of a Syrophœnician damsel who was possessed with a demon. Luke tells us, in the book of Acts, of Paul's expelling demons among the Gentiles, at Ephesus, and at Philippi. Plutarch, Josephus, and others, tell us of the practice of exorcism among both Jews and Gentiles. The case of the damsel who had a spirit of divination at Philippi, the witch of Endor, and the priestesses of Apollo, are doubtless alike. The Roman sibyls, who unquestionably had the confidence of the Roman people, as those who truly possessed some unusual powers, and whose prophecies we have every reason to believe were disconnected from holiness of life, must be regarded as under the power of evil spirits.

In different ages, and in different countries, men have exhibited proofs of spiritual power, where the circumstances forbid the supposition that any good spirit helped them. Oribasius, a learned physician of Pergamus, in the fourth century of the Christian era,

describes such circumstances. Meric Casaubon, in a treatise on enthusiasm, as quoted by Macknight in his "Essay on Demoniacs," about a hundred years ago, speaks of particular instances. He describes persons, mostly diseased persons, as having possessed very extraordinary powers. They uttered prophecies during periods of sickness, at times discovered secret things, and various of them spake languages which they had never learned : some Latin, others Greek, and others Hebrew. Raguseius declared that he had known a sick woman at Venice who was possessed of a power, at times, of speaking in various languages, and to discourse of things belonging to mathematics and philosophy. He witnessed it himself. When she was out of her fits she was stupid and sottish. He tells of Ferneilius, a learned physician, who had related to him the case, attended by divers learned physicians, of a man who had fits in which he would talk in Greek, of which language he was ignorant. Casaubon describes a very learned man and a philosopher, who gives a particular description of a woman who was subject to fits in which she spake the Armenian tongue very readily, although wholly ignorant of it, being a Greek. In the Apocalypse, the old persecuting dragon is represented as working miracles. The three unclean spirits, like frogs, which went out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, were the spirits of demons, going out to work miracles, and excite the nations to battle against the Almighty.

In our own times, we hear of persons who have been known to speak in languages which they have never learned. There are very many evidences of the extraordinary activity and power of spirits ; and the

public mind staggers and reels under the extraordinary pressure of evidence that there are spirits abroad in the earth, in great numbers, as though being marshalled for some grand conflict.

It is time for the church of God to awake from its slumbers. There is no safe place of shelter but in the shadow of the cross. Many spirits have gone out into the world. The rule for the Christian is, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God : Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." Every spirit, then, which is of God, will acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. Such will certainly refer us to the cross, where he suffered in the flesh, as our only place of refuge. We are not to believe what spirits say, though we may believe that spirits speak to us, if we have not proof that they are of God. Are they those who honor Jesus Christ as LORD, and come around our way to watch for our safety ? We will rejoice in their holy breathings of love. But do they encourage us to forsake the ways of God ? Then should we understand that they are not of God. Do they communicate through corrupt and sinful mediums, wicked men and women ? The evidence is strong that they are evil spirits, sent forth to deceive. Do they countenance extortioners, and wicked men, and oppressors ? Then they are opposed to Christ.

Everywhere do we see men acting as though they were led along blindly. It is neither consistent with faith nor reason for mankind to live as the mass are

now living. Everywhere we can see men trifling with the tears of widows and orphans, rejoicing in war, in the ruin of men by rum, and in every oppression which pays a profit to him who practises it. God has filled the world with plenty ; yet the poor perish for want. He has required piety, humility, and self-denial. Men practise profligacy, pride, and every kind of impiety. He has commanded his people to love their neighbors as themselves, and do to others as they would wish to be done by. But, alas ! how many carry tongues which are accustomed to tricks in trade, and hands which have been hardened by handling the gains of injustice ! How many honest, industrious, and godly men there are in the land who are denied a home for themselves and their families in this world, where everything belongs to God, and the profit of whose sweat and toil falls from the hand of a hypocrite into the contribution-box to the credit of a criminal ! Yet do these men realize that underneath their fair profession the stains of sin are upon them, as dark as eternal death ? No, they do not. They are under the influence of evil spirits, or some terrible delusion or other.

The spirits of the prophets were subject to the living prophets in Paul's day. In earlier times, the spirit which inspired Elijah remained with Elisha. There were gifts of healing in the primitive church. Whether the spirits of physicians continued to be interested in the cure of diseases, it is not for us to decide ; but each had their sphere. Evil spirits afflicted men by aggravating their diseases, and bringing various calamities upon them. There is no safety to the ungodly. The angels of God have no charge to keep them. If a man leans towards the temptations of sin, he becomes

ensnared. A profession of religion will certainly no more save a soul than the name of Jesus could keep Satan from tempting him.

There is no security but to him who daily casts himself upon the cross of Christ. The man of daily consecration to the service of God, the man of constant prayer, the child of faith, the imitator of the Saviour's life, may expect assistance from the Lord to overcome the world, the flesh, and Satan. The church of God must be his house, Christ his Lord, angels and spirits of the just his helpers, all saints his brethren, all men the objects of his benevolence. He must be holy, harmless, devoted to all that is good, and leaning to favor no wrong. His life must be such that when his Lord shall come to reckon with him He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." He must pray to God always.

God's people were, in ancient times, strictly forbidden to invoke the spirits of the dead to teach them or help them. They are now also required to call upon the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, his Son, our only Lord. Of the strange and peculiar manifestations pretendedly from spirits in these times, I have only to say, the manifestations are strangely unaccountable, and greatly calculated to distract the minds of men. The representations given appear to be so contradictory, on the whole, as to constitute a strong proof that it is something else than a scheme in which men are acting in concert to impose upon the community. Then, from the admissions of those who favor their work most, as considering it important and a divine agency, the spirits which communicate are full of tricks and lies, a large portion of them. Such, certainly, are not good

spirits. Are we safe in the company of evil spirits? They may assume the names of the good, and perform works of power, "if it were possible, to deceive the very elect." But the holy spirits, which act in obedience to the commands of God, can hardly be supposed to have leisure to come, at every call of human curiosity, to be questioned on matters of no consequence.

Take the peculiar circumstances of the times in whatever way we please, there is an awful warning to the professed people of God to devote themselves more entirely to the way of truth. The church should put away its apostasy, its partyisms, and its effeminate counsels, and buckle on the armor of Christ. It should cease to glory in worldly grandeur, and come again to glory in the Cross. It should depart from the inspirations of pride, selfishness, and carnal animosities, and seek after faith, humility, and love. It should leave the counsels of spirits which cannot be relied on, and trust the word of Him who cannot lie. It should appear in the beauty of holiness, as the bride of Christ, adorned with perfection, and obedient to her glorious and ever-living *Lord*.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

“I am the Good SHEPHERD.”—John 10 : 11.

TENDING sheep has been a very honorable employment since the first family of man. Righteous Abel was a shepherd, or tender of sheep. Jacob tended the flocks of his father-in-law. And David the son of Jesse, from whom the Messiah descended, was in youth a shepherd-boy.

It was to the shepherds about Bethlehem that the host-angelic proclaimed, “Behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people.”

There was no employment known among men which was more honorable than the shepherd-life. It was very proper, therefore, that a figure should be drawn from an employment so honorable, so worthy, and so useful, to illustrate and represent the care of the Great Master over his church.

A shepherd has constant care over sheep. He tends them by night and by day.

Christians are very often, in the Scriptures, compared to sheep. In fact, a sheep has become the emblematic representation of a Christian. For peaceableness, there is no active animal to be found which could

be more properly used as an emblem. They are not provided by nature with claws, or teeth, or horns, suited to the purpose of fighting. They are, in this respect, unfitted for war. The only war they can make is to strike with the forehead. And I trust it will not be thought unworthy of the subject to say that, in a certain sense, Christians are left to use their foreheads also to make battle. The fight of reason, intelligence, and truth, and the fight of faith, is allowable to Christians. But God has provided no other weapons for them.

Sheep naturally incline to congregate in flocks; and, if they are led by no shepherd, they will follow some strong and bold member of their own company. When they are obtaining food, in the field or on mountain-sides, they may be seen to scatter about very considerably. But when they are beset by danger and affected by fear, they intuitively cluster together, and show a desire for a leader. The strong and masculine members of a flock are foremost, and take the lead, when without a shepherd.

Among these leading sheep in a flock, which are usually followed as if understandingly by the rest of the flock, it is seldom that one is killed by dogs. Nor are the weaker and more feeble sheep apt to be killed, unless there is a great slaughter. But there are strong sheep who are the more likely altogether to be slain by dogs or wolves. It is interesting to contemplate this point; for it serves, if my recollections of early-life scenes are correct, to illustrate certain Scripture sayings.

When dogs press hard upon the flock, and the weaker keep together, following the leader-sheep, they are seldom injured unless there are a number of dogs; for as soon as the single dog seizes a sheep, the bold

leader drives against him with fury, and, others joining to batter the body of the common foe, he is glad to make good his retreat.

But it very commonly occurs that some strong one among the flock, as if to assume leadership in derogation of the common interest, strikes off from the flock, without any to follow him. The moment this is the case, the instinct of the wolf or the sheep-killing dog marks that aspiring traitor-rebel as his sure and devoted victim. He turns from the flock, and pursues that sheep to the death. He makes an easy prey of the treacherous would-be leader.

In the night-watchings of shepherd life, — the only time when that cowardly animal, the wolf, would attack a flock, — if the shepherd should attempt to flee for safety when a wolf comes, the attention of the wolf would be drawn after him just the same as after a single traitor-sheep. He would be pursued by the wolf, and caught and killed. So his only safety would be in the faithful defence of his flock.

A flock which is accustomed to the care, by day and by night, of a shepherd, becomes accustomed also to being led by him; so that the union of the flock depends positively upon the presence of the shepherd. Hence the saying, “I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” The shepherd gone, the flock will scatter.

We are prepared, with these things before us, to understand that saying of Jesus which immediately follows the text chosen for this discourse. It is as follows: “But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth

them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep."

The case supposes, what the general history of man would show to be true, that a hired shepherd, who had no interest or ownership in the flock, a man whose services were wholly procured by his hire, would be less disposed to face a wolf for the preservation of the flock than if he were the owner of the flock. So, "the hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep."

The application which some men would make of this passage, to prove that faithful ministers of Christ should be denied honorable wages, is extremely ridiculous and foolish. Besides, to make their own case good, they should show that they are the real owners of the sheep of Christ. While the fact is, those who receive a stipulated and honorable sum for their services are not a whit more hireling shepherds than those who manage to get their living out of the people, perhaps snatching half a fleece here and a quarter there. It should be remembered that Christ never required a mean or oppressive act to be done, nor sanctioned it; which certainly could not be true if he would justify his people in refusing an honorable compensation to his faithful ministers.

I will repeat the idea: *God never required a mean thing to be done.* He therefore never required of men to bestow their life-labor upon those who would deny an honorable return, nor required of those who are served and blessed to refuse compensation.

In contrast with the hireling, who would flee from danger, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And

again, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father ; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

He asserted ownership in the sheep of the flock. He assumed to be the shepherd-owner of the flock. As such, he declared his love to the flock would cause him to lay down his life for it.

He said further to his Jewish disciples : "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." Of all who would believe in him, among Jews and Gentiles, he would reconcile both to himself in one body by the cross. The Gentiles should "hear his voice," or, which was equivalent, his words of instruction.

Jesus was in Jerusalem, and is supposed to have been by the sheep-market when he addressed his disciples, by a parable, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him ; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him ; for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them ; but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came

before me are thieves and robbers ; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

In the parable, Jesus looks upon the fold into which the shepherd leads the sheep, and he takes up the similitude to himself leading the way into the abodes of eternal rest. He is the only way to God, and therefore he says, "I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and go in and out and find pasture." Truly Jesus may say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And again, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Then he represents himself at the same time as the door, and as the shepherd entering by the door before his sheep. Jesus was, in all his life and example, *the way*. Thus he was the door. What he requires of his disciples he practised first himself. While, therefore, having care as a good shepherd over his sheep, he enters before them, by the very way which he has set as the door, and the only door, for them.

So, when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and they have an example to follow in all the ways of duty.

Almost every person is aware that a dog will learn the voice of a person, with a very brief acquaintance, so that it would be impossible to deceive him. A sheep possesses the same ability to distinguish between different voices. The shepherd's voice to the sheep cannot be counterfeited. Accustomed to the voice of the shepherd, they will in a moment distinguish the

smallest difference which may mark a counterfeit. And the sheep of Christ are so familiar with the example and precepts of Christ that they know them fully, and they follow him. They will follow no other voice. They flee from men of any other voice.

There is something very peculiar to the teachings of Christ, as contained in the Christian Scriptures. There is a peculiar power in them which affects honest hearts. It penetrates even deeper than reason. I have taken the writings of the New Testament evangelists, and read from them to insane persons, who would listen to nothing else quietly for half an hour; and they would sit in perfect quietude, for hours together, to listen to the voice of Jesus in the Gospel. There is to all persons of true honesty of heart a *voice* in the practical discourses and precepts of Jesus, which finds its way down to the very depths of the soul, and is there recognized, as a sheep by intuitive perception, and without reason, acknowledges the voice of the true shepherd.

A very large portion of human beings become, almost as soon as they are born, without a manifest reason, habitually dishonest in heart. They seem to be fundamentally so. In the nice things of the truth they seem to have no perception of right. We see full proof of this in the fact that, of the millions of millions of human beings who have lived without Christ in the the world, there have been so few moralists, or moral philosophers. With a perfect cloud of crimes lowering and hanging around them, men have had no conscience against consenting to every species of corruption. But there have been those who have judged always that there was somewhere a line which divided between the

right and the wrong. This is the fundamental principle of honesty.

Such persons have been, without the revealed law of God, "a law unto themselves, their conscience the meanwhile accusing or else excusing them." They ever saw the need of a guiding teacher, a moral shepherd. In the hearts of such persons the truths of Christ are received as readily as food is received to the stomachs of the hungry. Whenever they distinctly hear the voice of Christ, — that is, when the precepts and truths of Christ are presented to them without any admixture of human dogmas or speculations, — they are at once received in the heart honestly.

When Jesus said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," he probably meant that among the Gentiles there were many whom he claimed as his own. They were living up to the best light they had already, and this was pleasing to God. Whenever they should have an opportunity of hearing his voice, or teachings, they would surely listen to it and follow him.

In the instructive parable of the sower, Jesus represented four classes of hearers, only one of which would bring forth fruit to perfection. They were such as received the word "into good and honest hearts," and who "brought forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold."

There are various peculiarities in the life and service of a shepherd, which find analogy in Christ as the leader of his people.

A shepherd leads his sheep by his call. When he calls they obey. So it is, as has just been said, with those of a truly honest heart. They follow readily

when they hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. They do not wait to be pulled along after what is right. They seek it at once. So it was where the apostles preached. In Berea there were some who heard Paul, and they searched the Scriptures daily to satisfy themselves concerning the preaching. At Athens also there were honorable persons who listened that they might know the truth and observe all its obligations.

Honest men are everywhere attracted by the simplicity and purity of the Gospel. Those who have from infancy manifested a strict conscience, and a serious but earnest devotion to *right*, will recognize in the precepts of Christ the true way of right and duty.

There is also in the Gospel a tone of command which naturally strikes the ear with force and effect. Those who listened to his words eighteen hundred years ago felt the force of this peculiarity in the preaching of Jesus. And they commented upon it. They said, "He speaks as one having authority."

The tone of authority is not harsh and disagreeable, like the tone of fretfulness. It is not plaintive, like the tone of persuasion. It is decided, yet simple. In commanding, it distinctly anticipates obedience. It does not reason when it commands. It assumes a right, and uses it.

Shepherds exercised their care over sheep who were yet not folded. They were in the open world. So the care of Christ, as a shepherd, is for his people while passing through this world. When he shall present them to the Father, he will be no more their shepherd. They will then no longer need his guidance.

Flocks were not fenced around when shepherds watched over them. It would be well now if flocks

united around their under-shepherds, instead of being tied up to sectarian posts, or fenced in by denominational creeds. It would be better than it now is.

The sheep followed their shepherds wherever they went to find pasture for them. Therefore, those who were constantly cared for by a shepherd would sometimes, for a short period, be put into the fold, and then led out again to some new place of pasturage. Hence the saying of Jesus, "They shall go in and out and find pasture." It was a promise of constant care and providence. The mountains of Judea were common feeding-grounds for sheep. Every shepherd must exert himself to look up places to lead his hungering flocks, which had not been already run over and eaten down. So the Good Shepherd leads his flock. For them all he "finds pasture." He will never leave them nor forsake them. In the season of storms and afflictions they shall find safety in the protection which he gives, as the flock of the shepherd found in the fold. And when the storm passes away they shall follow where he leads to green pastures, and beside the undisturbed waters. They shall obey no other than their Great Shepherd as having any authority to command. Christians are to call no other man master, because they have one Master, even Christ. They *must* go where he leads, or they will neither be nourished nor protected.

Dangers attended the flocks which were led among mountain wilds, in search of food. When David, as a shepherd-boy, kept his Father's sheep, there came a lion and took a kid out of the flock. And young David went out after the lion, and smote him, and delivered the kid out of his mouth. And when the lion

arose against the youth, he caught him by the beard, and smote him, and slew him. Also a bear came, and David slew him also.

In the Saviour's times wolves came against the sheep which fed upon the mountains and hills of Judea. Good and faithful shepherds were expected to defend the flocks they tended, even at the hazard of their own lives.

There is a lion, "a roaring lion," which attacks the flock of Christ, whenever and wherever there is an opportunity. The sheep must flee to the shepherd's care for safety. They can have no other protection. There is no other refuge. A close union of the flock, and reliance upon the shepherd, will secure safety.

No matter what dangers may press upon any lamb of the flock of Christ. The offspring of David will seize the lion by the beard and slay him before he shall be permitted to injure one of the little ones which believe in Christ. If a bear comes out of the wilderness to attack his flock, they may depend upon the Good Shepherd to defend them, and slay the bear. They have only to keep closely united, and the strong ones not endeavor to lead off as traitors to unity, and all will be safe. If there comes a time of spiritual darkness, and a wolf rushes in upon the flock, the same two ideas are important: keep close union, and obey the Good Shepherd. He will certainly deliver his flock.

Our Shepherd is the owner of the flock. He has promised to deliver them. And he says that no man shall be able to pluck his sheep out of his hand. It will be so. He has delivered, and he will deliver. He

will never leave nor forsake his faithful servants when in trouble.

There will be dangers, conflicts, and difficulties, while we are in this world. But all who truly follow Christ will be safe, and in the fold of joy and rest find eternal repose.

The kind shepherd was careful of the weak and tender lambs. He bore them in his bosom when they were too weak or weary to keep up with the flock. Our Good Shepherd will not be forgetful of the tender lambs. He will surely bear them in his bosom and carry them in his arms when they are weak. Let none try to put on more strength than they have, to keep up in the race with the strong sheep of the flock. It will be injurious. It is better to be carried in the arms of the shepherd. We must all be carried sometimes, or be left by the wayside. If we try to be stronger than we are, we may be left by the way, to bear the consequences of our folly and presumption. If we confess to him our weakness, he will help us; for he has been touched with the feeling of our infirmities. None need be afraid to trust him.

He will never suffer the honor of his name to be tarnished by the fact of neglecting a single one of his flock. Pastors of churches may suffer their attention to be taken up by the rich and active members of their flocks; but Christ will never pass by any of his faithful followers, be they rich or poor. The lonely widow, with her scanty morsel of bread, will find with her the power of him who on the mountain-side fed the thousands who were hungry with a few barley-loaves. Christian children, in their orphanage, if faithful to the call of the Good Shepherd, will find that he who took little children in his arms and blessed them will ever be able to provide for those who are of the kingdom of heaven.

“It is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps.” We all need a shepherd to lead us. There are nights of darkness when we must be out upon the mountains. And we shall need a shepherd there. When the prophets of Israel were persecuted and driven out from among men, were they not like the sheep of the Lord upon the dark mountains? They wanted a leader, a shepherd. There they were comforted when they remembered and sang, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside still waters.”

When the Great Shepherd of Israel was smitten, how the sheep were scattered abroad! The little flock, that chosen little flock, to whom the kingdom of heaven had been promised; how they were scattered when their Shepherd was taken from them and smitten! And how wildly they wandered about, until they heard the voice of the Shepherd again! Then they realized their need of the Shepherd.

All God's people are brought into places and circumstances of difficulty and doubt. There are many difficult passages in human life. The more anxiously one seeks to be wholly subject to the will of God, the more he will be led in mysterious ways. It is certainly so; and who can know the way without a shepherd?

It is not only true morally that we need a shepherd, but it is equally true providentially and spiritually. There are deep and dark providences, the meaning or the mercy of which we cannot understand. They shut down upon us as the supposed death of Joseph did upon his fond father, Jacob. There are dark clouds which roll out over our pathway, hiding everything. There are windy tempests, which fill the azure heavens with dust, so that we cannot see. There are fierce tornadoes carrying desolation, and sweeping pestilences spreading death everywhere; and they make the atmosphere too dense for our weak vision to penetrate,

and we need some kind shepherd, to whose voice we can listen, and who will lead us in the way of safety.

The darkest hours of trial have always preceded the greatest and most responsible hours of service. *Why* a thousand singular providences are, we cannot see while we are passing through them. But the time comes, perhaps, that they are comprehended.

It is important for all to know that what we cannot comprehend our Shepherd can, and that he will never lead his people wrong. If we cannot now read the handwriting of Providence, we must come closer to the scroll, and look at it more steadily, and wait until a voice, speaking out from the panorama, as it moves on, shall tell us the meaning of its symbols. Then from out of seeming darkness light shall beam. Out of silence shall come a voice. And the sheep of Christ shall hear it, and know that it is the Shepherd's call.

There are deserts in society more desolate, if possible, than the sands of Sahara. He who knows a friend has found an oasis, and to him the desert loses its gloom. I once, an inexperienced and ignorant child, thought that the truly good were always surrounded with firm friends, and had few foes. Since then I have read the lives of holy ones, of Jesus, and apostles, and prophets. The fanciful vision of my childhood has passed away, and I have learned that the purest men and women in the world are often seen in sadness and tears. If any will be Christ's disciples, they will follow him, to share in afflictions and disappointments, and through "much tribulation" enter into the kingdom of God. They may see the day when the world will frown and friends be few; but let them listen ever, and through all the voices of storm and tempest they will hear the Good Shepherd saying to them, "Be of good cheer." His presence will cheer them, and his voice will lead them to safety and repose in the fold of eternal and immortal union and life.

JESUS IN HIS OFFICES.

This subject is the most important one which is open to the minds of believers. None can consistently practise or appreciate the Christian religion without understanding JESUS IN HIS OFFICES.

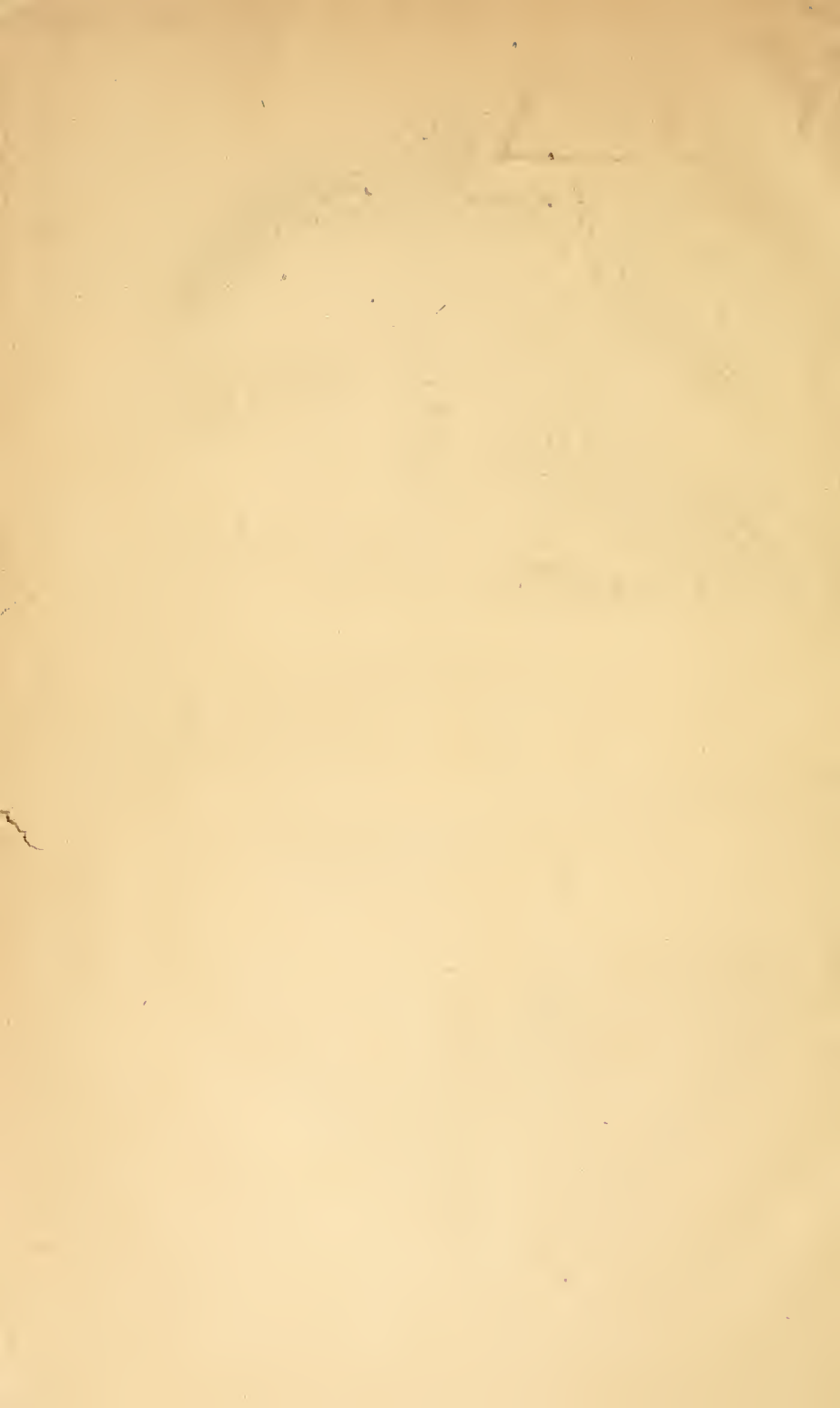
Upon this theme of thrilling interest I propose to publish a VOLUME OF TWENTY-TWO DISCOURSES. They will include the following subjects, with a Discourse on each, namely: *Second Adam, King, Lord of All, Mediator, High Priest, Apostle of the Father, Prophet, Deliverer, Head of the Church, Captain of Salvation, Ensign of the Nations, Foundation Stone, The True Light, Sun of Righteousness, Bridegroom, The Great Physician, The Faithful Witness, Minister of the Sanctuary, Lamb of God, The Good Shepherd, God with us, and Judge of Quick and Dead.*

The volume will be of between 400 and 500 pages, in large and beautiful type. It will be issued to subscribers in four quarterly numbers, at ONE DOLLAR for the volume. Advance payment must be always. Postage at the expense of subscribers, unless special arrangements otherwise, where large numbers are taken.

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All letters, at present, should be addressed to me at ASSONET VILLAGE, Bristol County, Mass.

A. G. COMINGS.



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